

Podcast: From anti-GMO journalist to crop biotech advocate—Alliance for Science managing editor Joan Conrow

For many years, the developing world has been at the center of a heated debate between mainstream scientists and anti-GMO activists. While a booming population puts pressure on farmers in Asia and Africa to [produce ever greater amounts of food](#), scientists say biotech crops—engineered to [resist pests](#) and withstand [climate change](#)—could boost yields and increase food security in developing countries. Activists, led by environmental groups like Greenpeace, counter that this humanitarian sentiment is merely a [“Trojan horse”](#) designed by Big Ag to get smallholder farmers hooked on their GMO seeds.



Joan Conrow

[Joan Conrow](#), managing editor at Cornell University’s Alliance for Science, says the activist version of events has no basis in fact. Working closely with reporters and researchers in Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana and dozens of other countries, she spearheads the nonprofit’s effort to set the record straight. It’s not multinational seed companies, Conrow says, but [farmers and consumers](#) encouraging governments in Asia and Africa to embrace GMO and [now gene-edited](#) crops.

Conrow wasn’t always an advocate for crop biotechnology, however. As a journalist based in Hawaii for three decades, she was skeptical of companies like Monsanto, whose reclusive nature at the time made her suspicious of their work. But once she saw how anti-GMO groups operate and began investigating the science behind biotechnology, she changed her mind.

On this episode of Biotech Facts and Fallacies, Conrow sits down with GLP editor Cameron English to tell her story and break down the [Alliance’s effort](#) “to promote access to scientific innovation,” enhance food security and improve the environmental sustainability of agriculture.

Joan Conrow has 35 years of experience as a journalist, editor, and communications consultant. She specializes in environmental issues, biotechnology, and agriculture. Follow her on Twitter [@joanconrow](#)

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