

Podcast: Science writer Michael Specter on what you should know about the coronavirus, food security and GMOs

Science writer, New Yorker contributor and author of the book Denialism [Michael Specter](#) joins Felix Salmon on the Slate Money podcast to break down the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

Specter explains how the virus spreads, potential food and medicine shortages it could cause and the possibility of developing immunity to infection. While the pandemic has shocked most of the world, Specter argues the only thing that should surprise anyone is the inept response of policy makers to the outbreak, particularly in the United States.

Specter also challenges some common misconceptions surrounding biotechnology, including the idea that GMOs are 'unnatural.' Concerns about monoculture, the practice of growing a single crop like corn, on the other hand, are valid, Specter says. But that issue has nothing to do with genetic engineering. It's a problem that could be solved by a change in government policies: ending subsidies to corn and soybean growers. However, there are trade offs involved, and eliminating monoculture farms isn't the simple decision it seems.

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