Clones, enzymes, stem cells and more: Learn these scientific terms to better understand biotech news

Quite often, you hear about advances in biotechnology in the news …. [Y]ou might feel as if the science and terms used are a little over your head. It helps to become more familiar with some of the common biotechnology terms ….

Enzymes are proteins that catalyze (cause a change in) specific biochemical reactions in cells …. Genetic modifications to enzymes through protein engineering techniques …. have allowed scientists to enhance the catalytic properties of certain enzymes ….

In biotechnology, one meaning of the term “clone” is any living organism …. with genetic material that is identical to that of the parent organism from which it was created.

A second meaning refers to cloning DNA, or the act of creating copies of an individual gene, for expression in a foreign host …. GMO refers to bacteria or other microorganisms, or multicellular organisms such as plants and animals, whose genetic makeup has been altered by scientists.

Often, GMOs are produced using gene cloning methods as a means of …. joining DNA from different organisms. An example of this is the introduction of genes for natural pesticides into non-native crop plants, to enhance insect resistance and reduce the need for chemical pesticides.

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