

Podcast: Ag Secretary Sonny Perdue interviews GLP's Jon Entine on feeding the world sustainably through biotech innovation and challenging the 'myth of organics'

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue wants to welcome you to his very own podcast – “The Sonnyside of the Farm.” Born and raised on a family farm in middle Georgia, Secretary of Agriculture Perdue is an agriculturalist through and through – having worked as a veterinarian, owning his own grain business, serving as Governor of Georgia and now serving as a member of President Trump’s cabinet as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. <https://geneticliteracyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Sonny-Side-of-the-Farm-Podcast-Episode-12.mp3>

On this month’s episode of The Sonnyside of the Farm, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue sits down with Jon Entine, Founder and Executive Director of the Genetic Literacy Project, to talk about innovation in agriculture.

If we as a society are going to continue doing our part to feed the growing world population, innovation agriculture must be able to adapt to a world where resources are waning and climate is increasingly unpredictable. We need to produce more with fewer ‘inputs’. That means agriculture should be based on ‘best practices’; we can’t depend on farming grounded in part in ideology—movements like organics and agroecology—especially across the African continent and developing countries where there is a critical need to dramatically increase food output while limiting our ecological footprint.

Advanced genetics and biotechnology, including new advances in gene editing, are essential to produce food more sustainably. Climate change and carbon pollution are growing threats to producing food around the world. If organic farming—which produces 40% less than conventional farms on the same amount of land—were to emerge as a dominant model, clear cutting of forests would ensue and carbon would be released at alarming rates.

We need to refocus agriculture on our environmental future. While America’s farmers and ranchers are up to the challenge, there is an emerging narrative in affluent countries that’s anti-science and hostile towards agricultural innovation, prompting many consumers to fear their food. Chemicals are blankly caricatured as dangerous. But crop protection is a key part of agricultural production, in organic and conventional farming.

The goal should be reducing the impact of chemical protectants, not demonizing them or substituting ‘natural’ chemicals in cases where they are far less effective or can cause more harm than the synthetic chemicals they might replace. Technology and advanced crop protection methods that carefully weigh benefits with environmental costs are essential. This episode will help educate and inform consumers that science and innovation in agriculture are safe and vital.

Jon Entine is founder and executive director of the [Genetic Literacy Project](#). Follow Jon on Twitter [@JonEntine](#)

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