

Golden Rice: A tool of modern day ‘neo-colonialism’?

Noted Forbes and Slate contributor, blogger, and speaker Kavin Senapathy recently went against the grain, railing against Golden Rice and its purported ties to corporatism in an essay called [Why I Stopped Defending GMOs](#).

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Stuck [in regulatory purgatory for years](#), the idea was to fortify a nutritional staple with a nutrient normally deficient in diets. Why? To aid in staving off juvenile blindness in the developing world.

In Senapathy’s view, GR is the modern day version of neo-colonialism, a patronizing “gift” that uses blind kids as GMO PR pawns. These are paternalistic first-worlders who force-feed a product down the throats of unsuspecting countries — those ill-equipped to fully evaluate the effects. Even if it’s “free” under a humanitarian license, there are strings attached, and corporations have sinister motives (a stealth indentured servitude?!). She also contends that it’s unnecessary, as great strides have been made to diversify diets and promote other interventions in the absence of GR.

Well, of course significant progress has been made in intervening years! It’s not like parallel cogs stop turning waiting for GR to play catch-up.

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By seeding doubt from a first-world soapbox, she’s ironically doing a disservice — and modeling many of the overbearing scenarios of privilege she outlines — to the same at-risk populations she professes to cherish. Kavin Senapathy, hero gone rogue? It appears so. I hope there’s room for redemption.

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