

## 3 key ways to turn agricultural biotechnology skeptics into science advocates

Activist groups around the world are still fighting against GMOs, despite what has now been more than 20 years of research indicating no adverse human or environmental effects.

And the stakes are high. [GMO products](#) could be the key to reducing the impact of climate change and tackling hunger and food insecurity around the world.

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“Anytime you are [promoting scientific ideas](#), you’re going to have people who are not excited about them,” says [Kevin Folta](#), professor at the University of Florida. “It applies to all science, whether you’re talking about genetic engineering or climate change.”

Before starting the conversation, think about how to be a better communicator. It starts by figuring out what neighbors, friends, relatives and, really, anyone cares about. Here are a few tips to get the conversation started the right way:

- Avoid inundating people with facts and figures. Talk about why you care about science. Make it personal and talk broadly about the motivation to promote science...
- Cater your conversation to the person you’re talking to. If talking to another scientist, feel free to get into the details and processes. When talking with someone who knows little about science, meet them where they are...
- Ask questions and show empathy. Listen, and show them you are listening. People are passionate about their food – and they should be. Learn more about what motivates them and their fears, acknowledge them and keep this information top of mind when talking about GMOs or other controversial topics.

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It’s tough to convert someone to 100% stand behind science, but it’s possible to sway them on several aspects. Understand their backgrounds and why they think the way they do. Employing these three tactics helps get the conversation off on the right foot.

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