

Viewpoint: ‘Lefty food and farm’ group’s implacable opposition to genetic engineering imperils life-saving virus research, writes Mother Jones

[Recently, the Center for Food Safety] [sued](#) the National Institutes of Health in an attempt to force the agency to reveal information about its funding for what is known as “gain-of-function” research — the term refers to a category of lab work that seeks to understand how viruses create pandemics.

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Why would this lefty food and farms group—and they aren’t alone—rail against high-level virology research? The key to the answer has to do with the Center for Food Safety’s long opposition to the practice of genetic engineering. In a recent phone call, I spoke to CFS’s [Andrew] Kimbrell, who explained what he sees as the connection.

[See the [GLP profile on the Center for Food Safety here.](#)]

“You genetically engineer bacteria and plants, then you genetically engineer animals, then you genetically engineer embryos—all that has happened, with some promise, but also a tremendous amount of danger and threat,” he said. “Now, viruses are not technically an organism, but they are living biological elements. So, they fit certainly within that narrative: Just because we can do something doesn’t mean we should do something.”

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With tens of thousands of followers on social media, anti-GMO groups have the potential to turn the tide of public opinion; hanging in the balance is science that could potentially help prevent the next pandemic.

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