

GLP Podcast: Academic freedom has limits? UK backtracks on neonic ban; 'Non-GMO' tearless onions

Does academic freedom protect professors who spread scientific nonsense online? The UK appears to be backtracking on a pesticide ban that has harmed its sugar beet farmers. Tearless, though perhaps less tasty, non-GMO onions are now available in some stores.

Join geneticist Kevin Folta and GLP contributor Cameron English on episode 152 of Science Facts and Fallacies as they break down these latest news stories:

- ['Free to fabricate' or 'barred from teaching'? Discord over COVID underscores threats to academic freedom — and the public](#)

Academic freedom allows university professors to pursue their research without fear of discipline from their employers. But what happens when an academic promotes utter nonsense during a pandemic? Do scientists have an obligation to use their liberty responsibly? COVID-19 has brought these awkward questions to forefront as everyone tries to digest the onslaught of information related to SARS-CoV-2.

- [England authorizes emergency neonicotinoid use to protect threatened 2022 sugar beet crops](#)

"I told you so," the world's agricultural scientists could say to the UK. Facing a serious drop in sugar beet yield, Britain recently authorized emergency use of banned insecticides called neonicotinoids, which effectively control aphids that infect sugar beets with [several deadly viruses](#). Neonics pose minimal risk to human health and the environment. But activist groups in the UK and EU, over the objections of many experts, convinced regulators to ban them. It's now clear how costly that decision was.

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- ['Sweet and mild': Non-GMO 'tearless' onion goes on sale in the UK after decades in development](#)

Do your eyes water any time you cut an onion? A new tearless variety may be the solution you need. How was it made, and why were the developers so eager to market it as non-GMO?

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