GLP podcast and video: ‘Clean’ cosmetics aren’t so clean; England embraces CRISPR crops; Gene-edited animals produce 30 percent more meat

So-called “clean” cosmetics have become a big business in recent years. But as with food fads like “Non-GMO,” clean cosmetics may actually be no better for consumers or the planet. England has approved the commercial use of gene-edited crops. Could this development set an important precedent in Europe? CRISPR-edited animals carrying a single mutation could produce a lot more meat, significantly boosting sustainable farming.

Podcast:

Video

Join geneticist Kevin Folta and GLP contributor Cameron English on episode 212 of Science Facts and Fallacies as they break down these latest news stories:

- **Rethinking the ‘clean cosmetics’ movement: ‘It’s reductive to think that just because it’s biotech it’s inherently more sustainable’**

Cosmetic manufacturers have followed the food industry’s lead and affixed all sorts of eco-friendly labels to their products. The problem is, makeup made from “natural” or “clean” ingredients is often bad for the environment, since it requires the use of endangered plants. The good news is that identical products can be made using ingredients manufactured in the laboratory, eliminating the need to harvest endangered species. Will consumers embrace these products if they’re made using modern biotechnology?

- **England becomes first European country to approve gene editing of plants and animals**

After living under Europe’s oppressive genetic engineering restrictions for decades, England has finally approved the use of gene editing to improve food crops, and may soon green light the technology in animal agriculture. Does England’s decision indicate that anti-GMO activism is losing its political influence in the UK and European Union?

- **30% more meat: Switching off just one gene with CRISPR produces animals with larger muscles**

Editing a gene that controls muscle break down in animals may enable farmers to produce 30 percent more meat from the same number of pigs, fish and cows. This presents a significant sustainability benefit

since it could reduce the amount of land, animal feed and other resources that would have been required in past years to produce more food. A handful of countries, notably Japan and Brazil, have already begun to utilize gene editing to enhance commercialized food products. Will other nations follow their lead?

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