

GLP podcast: Dangers of ‘diet weed’; Making insulin in cow’s milk; The conservative case for genetic enhancement

So-called “diet weed” is slowly gaining popularity across the US. Is this newfangled drug safe to consume? Scientists have successfully bred a cow that produces insulin in its milk, potentially opening the door to a new method of drug production that could lower prices for patients. Some conservatives argue that genetic enhancement is not only good but necessary to protect public health. How compelling is their argument?

Podcast:

Join hosts Dr. Liza Dunn and GLP contributor Cameron English on episode 260 of Science Facts and Fallacies as they break down these latest news stories:

- [‘Diet weed’: More than 10% of high school seniors take ‘loophole’ legal drug delta-8 THC. What are the consequences?](#)

Thanks to a loophole in federal drug regulations, consumers in states where marijuana is still illegal are experimenting with Delta-8 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a psychoactive chemical remarkably similar to delta-9 THC, the compound in cannabis that gets users “high.” Because recreational use of delta-8 THC is a relatively new phenomenon, there is little research into its health effects. This has some public health experts worried because a very small group of high-school students has reported using this “diet weed” in the last year. Can scientists and regulators catch up to the latest drug fad before delta-8 THC becomes more popular?

- [Coming era of cattle farming: Genetically engineered dairy cow produces human insulin in milk](#)

Scientists have successfully engineered a dairy cow that produces human insulin in its milk. Though it was only a proof-of-concept study, the ultimate goal of this research is to develop a more affordable way to mass produce drugs humans depend on to treat and prevent disease. Insulin was an appealing test case because it is still [exorbitantly expensive](#), even though pharmaceutical companies can produce large quantities of the hormone with existing technology. If more drug makers produce medicines using a variety of methods, they may be able to lower consumer prices and thereby expand access to life-saving drugs. Of course, it remains to be seen if genetically engineered cows are a viable solution to ballooning drug costs.

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- [The radical conservative case for genetic enhancement Jonathan Anomaly](#)

Going back decades, prominent conservative thinkers have objected to human genetic engineering on ethical grounds. They argue that it is irresponsible to permanently modify a person's DNA (often before they're born) without understanding the long-term consequences. But there appears to be some internecine debate developing on the political right, with some commentators arguing that technologies like [germline editing](#) are necessary to conserve the health of our society. Let's take a closer look at this "radical conservative" case for genetic enhancement.

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