

To The Editor:

American farmers are to be commended for the ample food production in this country. Production efficiency continues to increase and the safety of our food supply is better than it has ever been. In spite of all the criticism, American farmers are doing a good job.

Looking ahead, farmers in this country and the ag-related industries that support them are faced with the tremendous challenge of feeding an expanding world population requesting more nutritious food. American farmers will carry the major part of this burden if that challenge is to be met. The use of genetically modified (GM) crops, in my view, has been and, in the future, will be a primary to the expanded production of high quality foods.

Yet, GM crops are opposed by a small but vocal segment of our society. These well-fed consumers are blinded by romantic nostalgia for the traditional farming practices of the past. Because they have enough to eat, they can afford to indulge in aesthetic illusions. In addition, the anti GM concept has been embraced by the organic movement—a rejectionist philosophy frozen somewhere in the 1950's. This is analogous to freezing transportation technology with the horse and buggy.

Those opposed to GM technology assumed that use of GM crops would increase use of pesticides when, in reality, use of chemicals for crop production has decreased dramatically. They further assumed that GM crops would only benefit large corporations when

the real benefit has been for farmers who have saved billions of dollars in the purchase of crop protection chemicals.

In the big picture, there are far-reaching benefits to the adoption and use of GM technology. The higher yields that evolve from the use of GM crops mean that fewer acres will be needed to produce the food that we need and marginal lands will not be put into production. This is a positive for our environment and less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

In my opinion, the organic zealots who are opposed to the use of GM crops and modern technology are really opposed to science in agriculture. The science has clearly documented that organically grown foods are NOT healthier and more nutritious. There are no cases where cause of death has been attributed to ingestion of foods produced using GM technology. Yet, how many deaths in recent years have been traced to food grown using “organic” practices?

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