Evaluation of the need to have printed information on bioengineered foods

Science, Genetics

Assignment 1E – GMOs

The ethics of genetic modification is heavily nuanced and is slowly becoming more and more polarized. It raises issues regarding the value of science and the importance of research methodology. One of the most important concerns that the GMO debate brings up stands to go against the prevailing mindset of the majority of the 21st century. This is the idea that there can be such a thing as too much public support for scientific change. This is explored in Maywa Montenegro's article regarding the information surrounding the GMO debate. In her article Montenegro explores the nuances of the GMO debate and explains how even supporting science needs to be overviewed with a careful eye and that it needs to be applied carefully to the world (Montenegro 2015). Blind faith in any form is dangerous and to accept a conclusion blindly, no matter how supportive it is, constitutes bad science and bad policy. Is it right to allow people to consume food that is supported on shaky scientific studies? Montenegro continues, arguing that GMOs need to be stripped of their economic biases and be based in the public sector as a tool to target important food related issues.

The importance of separating science from private interests is vital to ensuring trust and validity in science. The dangers of not doing so are made evident in Pam Strayer's article about the people suffering from lymphoma that may be caused by glyphosate. In her article, Strayer follows the proceedings of more than 2, 400 lawsuits against Monsanto, one of the largest producers of glyphosate pesticides. Strayer explained the way that Dauber hearings are held and the importance of scientific information in a

Dauber hearing. These types of hearings regard evaluation of evidence by a judge to deem if the evidence is valid enough to be presented to a jury (Strayer 2018). It is here that a judge's familiarity and literacy in science becomes most important as the judge needs to be able to validate the scientific methods used by both the plaintiff and the defendant. However, the private biases that may be held by either side make it difficult to establish certainty for either side's defense. By allowing the science behind GMOs to become polarized and, in effect, blindly believed, we have made it very difficult to be objective about GMOs. Although science cannot truly be impartial, it is undeniably a part of society and therefore must deal with the ramifications of that. Knowing this, is it valid to make judgements about the use of GMOs when the sources of information surrounding them are biased and unreliable?

The issue of scientific validity harkens back to Dr. King's words regarding the depravity of moral progress (King 191). Our moral reasoning stands far behind the rapid and extreme scientific progress that has been made. As a result, we, as a society, have failed to recognize that even the ethics of something that tries to be detached from society, such as science, must be examined with rigorous scrutiny for validity and credibility. The popularization of science has gained it large amounts of trust as an impartial and infallible source, but science too can be misunderstood and may not imply the conclusions that the title of a science journal article may say. As such, we must strive to treat science as a powerful tool but not as the absolute truth.