

Argument-memo



Address Telephone Email Dr Lee Cerling Director of Research and Communications PAC 10 Consulting Address Dear Dr Cerling With this letter and attached memorandum I am seeking a position as an intern within PAC-10 Consulting.

The enclosed memorandum serves to illustrate my abilities in original thought, analysis and written communication skills, wherein I have researched the controversial issue of Genetically Modified Food (GM food). I have presented the main arguments presented by proponents of GM food, which focus on the way in which it can improve on nature, feed a hungry world, and be beneficial to the environment; at the same time I have endeavored to present opposing views that focus on its implications to health, the environment and ethical concerns that may be associated with GM food.

You will note from my discussion that after intensive research on this debate I arrived at the conclusion that much, if not most opposition stems from a few who in a sense are praying on vulnerable consumers by appealing to their sense of ethics and frightening them using science, when in reality they are attacking the multinational companies involved in the production of GM crops.

I recommend that multinationals take stock of Monsanto's pledge which proposes advocating five commitments: respect, transparency, dialogue, sharing, and benefits. By doing so they will be better equipped to curb opposing assumptions and hearsay and at the same time better equip consumers to make their own judgments and make up their own minds as to the safety and whether they consume GM food.

I also recommend that all issues pertaining to benefits and costs of GM crops

should be based on scientific research, not commercial concern or public fears.

I thank you for the opportunity of to join your elite team of Business Analysts and remain optimistic that my application will be successful in gaining a highly coveted position at PAC-10 Consulting.

Yours sincerely

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Lee Cerling, Director of Research and Communications

From:

Date:

Re: Genetically Modified Foods

GM food has incited intense open debate, extensive scientific dialogue and widespread media coverage. This memo will summarize the pros and cons of the issue, address the main strengths and weaknesses of both sides and wrap up with three or four recommendations.

Although there has been an enormous amount of information on the possible benefits of GM food supplied by scientists and other specialists, and authorities, there is fervent consumer opinion that genetically modified (GM) food yields, could lead to unfavorable results in a variety of areas.

Arguments have focused on the “ health implications and environmental impact of cultivating GM crops and have raised disputes over national interests, global policy, and corporate agendas.” (Hsin, 2002, para. 1)

Although there are a number of facets to this dispute, it should be kept in the perspective of scientific evidence, together with a vigilant consideration of agricultural potential now and in the future.

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Arguments for and against

Proponents of GM food claim they are more nutritious and aesthetically pleasing as well as possessing a longer shelf life allowing more time for administration and transportation. They purport that GM crops undergo more stringent testing for nutrition and safety than traditionally grown crops.

While those in opposition argue that testing is not as rigorous as medical testing and therefore may not reveal some consequences of mixing genes; potential for adverse health side effects, such as the effectiveness of antibiotics could be reduced if genes coded for such resistance enter the food chain. (Hsin, 2002)

Those in favor also believe that there is no danger in changing genetic composition, reasoning that genetic mutations occur in conventional farming as well as nature, but those against believe there is potential danger reasoning that unnatural organisms are created which may cross over between plants and animals which in nature never occurs, and could create moral/ethical concerns for vegetarian and religious groups. They are also concerned about the permanency of genetic contamination and the fact that adding genes can damage regular genes.

Advocates for GM crops contest there is less wastage, greater yields and cheaper production leading to cheaper food when crops are adapted to resist pests or disease, which would also reduce the need for chemical sprays; crops altered to resist drought or produce bigger harvests would also benefit people in some developing countries. In contradiction, those not in favor claim that the heavy use of pesticides will damage the environment by contaminating water and soil, as well as building up tolerance levels, creating ever increasing use, leading to repercussions for the balance of

nature, wildlife and the environment.

I believe that in reality, much of the opposition to GM food is being caused by gossip, innuendo and inaccuracies; organization such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace know how to attain worldwide media focus, and to instill fear in consumers through their emotive or misleading accounts; others propagate arguments supposedly based on science in order to stir up the masses but in reality it is more to do with their opposition to multinational corporations - the part they play and the money they make; in other words, the underlying belief of opponents of GM food is that genetic production is profit driven not science driven.

The industry is expensive to run and the development of GM technology is not cheap thus of course it is the larger conglomerates and multinationals that have the resources required; no business wants to or is able to operate without making a profit and the incentive to succeed only helps to foster innovation.

Despite bans on GM crops, many countries are already eating GM food and consumers enjoy having the choice of organic, GM or conventionally grown vegetables and fruit.

Recommendations

My recommendation is all multinational organizations involved with the production of GM foods adhere to the pledge outlined by Monsanto, which incorporates five commitments: respect, transparency, dialogue, sharing, and benefits. (Hsin, 2002, final para)

This would help to calm consumers and ensure they have access to all information thereby allowing them to make their own judgments based on their own understanding and convictions, rather than from scaremongering.

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Commitment must ensure that any potential risks are scrutinized and compared to the risks linked with existing agricultural practices and conditions, and progress must be steady not too fast. It takes many years of use to assess how new technologies can effect human health and the environment.

Commitment must also ensure that factors in relation to the benefits and costs of GM crops should be based on scientific research, not commercial concern or public fears.

Forty years ago we believed that many of our global problems would be solved with nuclear power. We cannot afford to make the same mistake again!

Works cited

Hsin, Honor (2002) ' Bittersweet Harvest: The Debate over Genetically Modified crops' Harvard International Review. Gale Group 24: 1 Pages 38+
[www. questia. com](http://www.questia.com)