

Genetic modification and vaccines are one and the same - both are exceptionally powerful tools which have the potential to change the world for the better and save millions of lives if actually used, and yet they both succumb to foolhardy, unscientific criticism and bias.

This page exists to make right some common misconceptions about genetic modification. If you already know a lot about genetic modification or don't care (you should, it's interesting) then feel free to skip this.

To list the common criticisms and misconceptions:

- It's unnatural!
- It can spread to other plants and •create superweeds
- It's grown for profit, and therefore evil
- Companies extort farmers for seeds each year
- The seeds are patented and farmers can get sued if GMO crops "contaminate" their fields
- It's not organic!
- It's unreliable and unsafe!



Pictured: BT cotton, a genetically modified cotton plant resistant to bollworms whose high yields and lack of pesticide requirement are providing employment (and clothing) for people in India.

Answers to these common criticisms and misconceptions:

- Lots of things are, in fact, we've been genetically modifying plants for thousands of years via selective breeding. The only thing different about these ones is that we let retroviruses do the hard work for us.
- GM plants can, in fact, escape from farms, however, there has never once been any negative impact from this on the world, environment, or people. If anything, this strengthens certain plants to survive climate change.
- Many things are grown for profit, and I highly doubt you can assign a morality value to a plant.
- Profit is simply a motivation, and things done in pursuit of it are all too often beneficial to humanity for us to discount all of the great things done to enrich individuals.
- The plants are not sterile, and farmers can replant them if they want to. It's simply easier for them to buy new seeds it seems.

- Not once has this happened, and while Monsanto has gone after people they suspect of stealing their product, no one has yet been sued for inadvertent contamination.
- In fact, many GMO crops are, by dictionary definition. Their genetic resistance to pests and other ailments mean that farmers can safely grow them without chemical protection.
- Not once have GMO's caused any environmental or human catastrophe. Once, in an open letter signed by more than 100 Nobel prize winners, many scientists argued that GMO's can save lives by feeding more people. Millions of people suffering from vitamin deficiencies could be saved if only the popular resistance to GMO's ended.

While this may be a bit of a non-sequitur compared to the rest of this slideshow I would like to explain why I included it:

This entire slideshow is dedicated to answering and exploring controversial questions with a lot of grey, or supposedly grey areas. Genetic modification is a divisive topic, and I thought it would be wise to include at least a small segment on it here.