

BI402B Sustainable Agriculture Seminar 2009

List of Potential Debate Resolutions

Please express your opinion on the following debate resolutions by placing either an **F** (indicating that you favor the resolution) or an **A** (indicating that you are against the resolution) in the space preceding each resolution statement. **Turn in your completed ballot to my mailbox in the Bio department office by Monday, 16 Feb 2009.**

- 1) ___ Resolved, corn-based and cellulosic-based biofuels are ecologically and socially responsible alternatives to America's current dependence on fossil fuels.
- 2) ___ Resolved, because it is cheaper than organically grown food, conventionally grown food is a greater benefit to the poor.
- 3) ___ Resolved, consumption of GE food poses significant health risks compared to consuming non-GE food.
- 4) ___ Resolved, consumption of conventionally grown food increases the prevalence of allergies relative to consumption of organically grown food.
- 5) ___ Resolved, it is a benefit to society to consider genes as property that can be owned and patented.
- 6) ___ Resolved, gene flow from GE crops into the natural environment is rare and does not pose a significant threat to biodiversity.
- 7) ___ Resolved, the benefits of increasing food production in developing nations through the use of GE crops outweighs the potential environmental and health risks posed by such crops.
- 8) ___ Resolved, because of its greater efficiency in terms of amount of food produced per area of land used for production, conventional farming has a greater capacity to save wilderness than organic farming.
- 9) ___ Resolved, GE crops do not pose significant risks to non-target organisms.
- 10) ___ Resolved, considering *only* human health and nutrition, conventionally grown crops are substantially equivalent to organically grown crops.
- 11) ___ Resolved, considering only human health and nutrition, GE crops are substantially equivalent to non-GE crops.
- 12) ___ Resolved, it is not reasonable to suggest that the study of Ewen and Pusztai 1999, in which it was reported that lab animals fed GE potatoes developed gastrointestinal lesions, was a fundamentally flawed experiment.
- 13) ___ Resolved, the *process* of adding genes to our food by genetic engineering is no more risky than adding genes by traditional breeding.
- 14) ___ Resolved, biological pest control methods offer little or no advantages compared to chemical methods because pests can develop resistance to biological methods just as readily as they do to chemical methods.
- 15) ___ Resolved, because crop yields are too low, organic farming is not a viable option for meeting global food demands.
- 16) ___ Resolved, farmers should be able to propagate seed for their own use regardless of whether or not the seed is patented.

The following resolutions were interesting, but presented problems that for a variety of different reasons made them less suitable for debate:

- 17) ___ **Resolved, development of GE crops to solve pest and disease problems should only be allowed *after* traditional breeding solutions to the problems have been found to be ineffective.
- 18) ___ **Resolved, genetic engineering of crops represents the next logical progression in the evolution of agricultural crop diversity.
- 19) ___ **Resolved, large-scale adoption of organic farming is not feasible because there is not a large enough quantity of compostable materials available to meet the nutritional needs of the crops.
- 20) ___ **Resolved, there is no difference using synthetic fertilizers compared to organic fertilizers for providing plant nutrition because nutrients must be mineralized before being used by plants.
- 21) ___ **Resolved, the widespread use of GE crops represents a violation of the precautionary principle.
- 22) ___ **Resolved, banning the use of growth-promoting antibiotics for livestock production is undesirable because it will raise the cost of food.
- 23) ___ **Resolved, combining organic farming methods with GE technology has the potential to improve the overall health of consumers, as well as increase the sustainability of farming operations.