



Online Ethics Center  
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

# Graduate Student Discussion - Genomics and Crops

## Description

Part of unit 3 of the Course on Genomics, Ethics, and Society, this graduate-level case study looks at issues of the ethics of genetically modified crops.

## Body

**Directions: Read the following scenario to prepare for the discussion.**

*Imagine that you are a farmer living in a country with severe food access problems. Suppose you have been asked by a large multinational corporation to test GM corn on your land. The corn has been modified to be resistant to drought and pests, which typically reduce your annual yields. If the tests are successful, this corn can be produced in great quantities, by both you and other farmers, and sold cheaply to chronically undernourished people in your region. However, you recognize other problems with testing the corn. For one, you do not know what impact it will have on your other crops, including your non-GM corn. You are also aware that concerns have been raised about environmental impacts of GM crops, and you aren't sure how these might apply in your case. Another problem is that it is not guaranteed that you will receive GM corn to sell in the future, even if tests go well. There are many larger farms in the region with much more land, owned by farmers with much more money and power in the local community. If the corn is sold by these farmers, you may eventually be out of business.*

**In this discussion forum, create a thread telling your classmates whether or not you would agree to test the corn and the ethical reasons for your**

**decision. We expect a lively discussion, not an essay, and it is OKAY to change your view more than once during the discussion or stick to your view throughout the discussion. Post your brief initial entry on the FIRST DAY so that everyone can respond to others' ideas throughout the discussion. You should contribute at least three times to the discussion. The [graduate student grading rubric](#) explains what we're looking for in this discussion: good writing quality, clarity and relevance, a response on the first day of discussion, then a collegial exchange with other members of the discussion; your posts should show knowledge and understanding of the readings, and you should try to develop an argument for which you provide support, and that engages critically and thoughtfully with the course materials.**

[Continue to Case Analysis and Instructions](#)

## **Rights**

Use of Materials on the OEC

## **Resource Type**

Case Study / Scenario

Instructor Materials

## **Topics**

Emerging Technologies

Risk

## **Discipline(s)**

Genetics and Genomics

Biomedical Engineering and Bioengineering

Life and Environmental Sciences