

EU should adopt use of GMOs

Pressure from the United States and famine in Africa make GMOs a viable choice

On June 23, President George W. Bush gave a speech at the Biotechnology Industry Organization's annual convention. This year, 17,000 representatives from biotech companies and universities around the globe were scheduled to attend. In front of this audience, Bush justifiably criticized, the European Union's stance on genetically modified organisms — a stance which may indirectly be contributing to famine in Africa.



MIDHAT FAROOQI

"Acting on unfounded, unscientific fears, many European governments have blocked the import of all new biotech crops," he declared. Bush is right. Not only is the EU's regulatory policy on GMOs based on "unscientific fears," it prevents developing countries from accepting biotechnology and, according to international trade law, is illegal. When these developing countries refuse to use GM foods, often to guarantee that their exports will sell to the EU, they do so at the expense of their own citizens' health.

The president's words reinforce the lawsuit the United States filed last month with the World Trade Organization against the EU. The court case says the EU freeze on approving GMOs is not based on scientific proof that genetically modified products cause environmental or health problems. Thus, the GMO 'moratorium' is illegal under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement, which says that all regulatory policies are to be based upon scientific principles. Not only is the moratorium illegal, but it also denies many starving people access to food — food they may needlessly fear will harm their health.

But to date, there is no credible evidence that genetically modified foods adversely affect the environment or human health. Lester Crawford, the deputy commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, testified before Congress that there was no data showing that any bio-engineered foods currently sold were unsafe to eat. "The evidence shows that these foods are as safe as their conventional counterparts," he said.

Europe's own scientific associations, such as Britain's Royal Society and the French Academy of Sciences, maintain that there is no evidence that GMOs pose a risk to human health. Professor Patrick Bateson, vice president of the Royal Society, even challenged critics of biotechnology: "The public have been told for several years that GM foods are inherently unsafe to eat ... We have examined the results of published research, and have found nothing to indicate that GM foods are inherently unsafe. If anybody does have convincing evidence, get it out in the open so that it can be evaluated."

However, Pascal Lamy, the EU Trade Commissioner, criticized the United States for blaming EU regulations. "The U.S. claims that there is a so-called 'moratorium,' but the fact is that

the EU has authorized GM varieties in the past and is currently processing applications." He neglects to mention that the EU has approved no new agricultural GM product since October 1998. Thus, in practice, there is a moratorium.

Also, in the same speech, Bush correctly argues that, "because of these artificial obstacles, many African nations avoid investing in biotechnology, worried that their products will be shut out of important European markets. For the sake of a continent threatened by famine, I urge the European governments to end their opposition to biotechnology."

The EU, however, refused to acknowledge that its position on GMOs contributed, if only indirectly, to the famine in Africa. "These suggestions made by the U.S. are simply not true," said an EU spokesman.

This flies in the face of truth. Last year, Zimbabwe, a country in famine, rejected a shipment of U.S. corn, because it was not certified as GMO free. The country's government feared that local farmers would plant the corn or use it to feed livestock, and would result in crops and animals that could not be sold to the EU.

Zimbabwe is not the only country to express such worries. Namibia refused to buy South Africa's cattle feed because it contained GM corn. The country wished to keep from hurting its beef exports to Europe. Uganda would not plant a disease-resistant type of banana because of fears that it would endanger exports to Europe. India, China and various Latin American countries have similar misgivings.

Bush did well to criticize the EU's anti-GMO policy. The moratorium is invalid, and its adverse effects are felt far beyond Europe's borders. Since 1998, it has caused American farmers to lose \$300 million annually. For five years, the United States has been patient with the EU on this issue. It is about time the EU relaxed its restrictions.

Midhat Farooqi is a senior genetics major.
Graphic by Seth Freeman.



MAIL CALL

Supreme Court's sodomy decision is disappointing

In response to Midhat Farooqi's July 3 column:

Perhaps Midhat Farooqi's opinion on the Supreme Court's sodomy ruling should have been kept private. His claim that heterosexuals may legally engage in sodomy is specious, because sodomy is by definition a homosexual act.

Homosexuality is defined by actions; it is entirely different from the issue of race. The State of Texas does indeed have a legitimate purpose in prohibiting homosexual behavior, which is associated with a 6,000 percent higher incidence of HIV and other STDs, as well as a significantly higher incidence of child molestation, than heterosexual behavior. Mr. Farooqi also makes the claim that "States...cannot write laws based on morality." Yet every law is based on the premise that one thing is right, while another is wrong.

That is morality; without it, we could have no laws. Mr. Farooqi does, in fact, ask the appropriate question: "Which morality code should the state follow?" The answer is, the "Christian" one — or, more accurately, the "Judeo-Christian" one — because that is the moral code upon which our foundational law is based.

Noah Webster, founder of the U.S. public education system, said, "The religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and His apostles, which enjoins humility, piety, and benevolence; which acknowledges in every person a brother, or a sister, and a citizen with equal rights. This is genuine Christianity, and to this we owe our free Constitutions of Government."

I can say it no better than Mr. Webster. It is a pity that our Supreme Court has seen fit to despise, yet again, both the moral foundation of law and the right of states to govern themselves as they see fit. It may be a happy day for the sexually deviant, but it is a sad day indeed for America.

Jon L. Gardner
Class of 1989

Decision to run editorial cartoon was in poor taste, 'ill-advised'

In response to the July 2 political cartoon:

I was shocked and profoundly disappointed to see the cartoon on the editorial page of The Battalion on Wednesday, July 2. I firmly believe that the decision to include an editorial cartoon that depicts members of the Klan commenting on the recent Supreme Court decision related to higher education admissions policies was at best ill-advised and at worst a deliberate attempt to fan flames of emotion over an issue that deserves intelligent discussion.

Michael Murphey
Class of 2006

The decision to print this cartoon is in direct opposition to the values and principles of Texas A&M. Dr. Gates clearly articulated A&M's position regarding affirmative action and the Supreme Court's recent decision.

Although The Battalion has every right to disagree with Dr. Gates' and the University's position, the decision to print this inflammatory and disgusting cartoon is counter to your recently expressed desire for the paper to be more responsive to the community it serves.

Bill Kibler
Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

Affirmative action only perpetuates racism on campus

In response to a July 2 mail call:

Affirmative action, which Mr. Prehn and other liberals so joyfully tout in their efforts to gain minority votes, does nothing to dispel age-old racism. Are liberals so naive as to think that, after more than a century of racism and mistreatment of minorities in our nation, they can end racism simply by reversing its target and labeling it "diversity?"

Affirmative action at universities such as Texas A&M will only serve to perpetuate racism by drawing a clear line between caucasians and minorities. Mr. Prehn himself illustrates this point when he claims that we should be willing to trash the rights of "a few borderline white males." Affirmative action splits and ranks society along racial lines, and it will cause the next generation of Americans, our future children, to harbor negative feelings toward their minority peers who will be seen as having unfair opportunities in education and in life.

While recruiting high quality students to Texas A&M is an important goal, race shouldn't be a factor. Who are we to decide that a high quality minority student will bring more value to this University than would an equally-qualified white student? Recruitment should be based on academic prowess, strength of character and an individual's determination to succeed in life — not race. A good "other" education is built off of diverse personalities, opinions and values.

Affirmative action is an ill-conceived attempt to bandage over our country's regrettable past. It is a poor treatment that will only delay the healing of our nation by causing the wounds of racism to fester and remain open to the generation of our children. We have all heard the old adage, "Two wrongs don't make a right," and it definitely applies to this issue. Only time and the passage of generations will heal and leave behind the centuries-old scars of racism in our nation.

War critics cannot also support troops

(U-WIRE) BOWLING GREEN, Ohio — A few months back, I heard Rush Limbaugh say something on his radio program that I found to be jaw-droppingly shocking; shocking because I agreed with him completely. Limbaugh in his usual tactful way was discussing the city of Chicago and a recent resolution that the windy city had passed. In short, the resolution stated that while the city of Chicago opposed a preemptive strike on Iraq it pledged its "unconditional support to U.S. military personnel serving at home and abroad in their tireless battle against global terrorism."

Limbaugh took issue with people condemning the war while at the same time, shouting "support our troops" at the top of their lungs, and as much as it pains me to say so, I agreed with him then and I agree with him now.

It has been my opinion that opposing the war while supporting the troops is as illogical as opposing the guns but supporting the bullets. The government sent the troops to Iraq, but it is the troops doing the work. It is likewise illogical to use the justification that many of the young troops currently serving in the armed forces are there strictly for financial reasons, college or otherwise.

When an individual joins the military, it is more than a possibility that they might be put into combat, after all it is the military. If one believes that the war was illegal and unethical, one must likewise condemn the troops who carried out the war. This is not to say I'm advocating a return to a Vietnam era of spitting on returning soldiers, nor have I wished them harm at any point in the fighting, but I will not support the actions of what I perceive to be an immoral war that potentially has dire long-term consequences both domestically and abroad. Many people may disagree with my position on the matter, but unlike the Bush Administration, at least I'm honest about my stance on that matter.

On Monday, an editorial ran in the Army Times that blasted the Bush Administration for the two-faced manner in which it has treated the individuals serving in the armed forces. This editorial should not be taken lightly given the fact that Army Times is part of the Military Times Media Group and delivers news directly relevant to those both serving in and with relatives in the army. In other words, Army Times is about the last place one might expect to find criticism of the current administration, which

is all the more reason to stand up and take notice. The editorial accuses both the Bush Administration and the Republicans in congress of practicing "nothing but lip service."

The editorial further goes on to point out how on one hand the Bush Administration is quick to give praise to the armed forces, but falls short in every other respect. Rather, the Bush Administration has cut veterans benefits, cut danger pay, and cut family separation allowance for troops in combat zones.

What is perhaps most sickening of all, however, is that in a time when the Bush Administration seems quick to send troops overseas and to implement force the same White House opposes as a measure in congress which would double the \$6,000 gratuity received by families of troops who are killed on active duty. Over 200 American soldiers have been killed in the Iraqi war, 50 alone since Bush declared the fighting over and he opposes a measure that seeks to better compensate the families of those killed.

This sort of hypocrisy should not come as a great surprise to anyone who follows the actions of the current administration, however. After all this is the same president who was only admitted into the Texas Air National Guard after the governor called in a favor. This is the same president who was AWOL for over a year before reporting for duty. This is the same president whose staged performance aboard the USS Lincoln was so over the top it might as well have been pulled from the film "Independence Day." Time and time again, Bush has offered nothing but "lip service" when it comes to the military, urging support for the military in one breath and undermining it in the next.

I do not support the actions of the troops in this war; but I've been honest about that from the beginning. It is time for the Bush Administration to demonstrate this same level of honesty. It is time for the government to either offer the soldiers something more substantial than praise or to bring them home. As it stands now the ones doing Bush's dirty work are the ones being exploited, and it is time for the Bush Administration to support the troops in more than words alone.

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at Bowling Green State University.