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The Seeds of Spin: Decoding Pro-GMO Lies and Falsehoods

By Colin Todhunter
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Theme: Biotechnology and GMO, Media Disinformation

If you are in some way critical of genetically modified food and agriculture or have some concerns that remain unaddressed, here is a brief interpretive (satirical) guide for navigating the seedy world of pro-GMO spin.

1) We are pro-science and objective.

Meaning: We are industry supported and dismiss out of hand this type of anti-GM nonsense that suggests our science is somehow tainted.

2) Our critics are anti-science Luddites.

Meaning: Unlike us, they rely on 'pseudo science', labelled as such because it is not funded by the industry and its conclusions challenge the commercial interests of it.

3) Our critics are human haters because they deny GM food to the hungry.

Meaning: We learned to say this in our seminars about 'dealing with anti-GMO campaigners'.

4) We are humanitarians, while they are ideological elitists.

Meaning: We learned this also in our strategy seminars and meetings.

5) This academically unqualified anti-GM gang are hurting the poor.

Meaning: Critics of GM with valid concerns are hurting profit margins.

6) "All that people like you know is to stop progress and US agriculture is doing fine and thanks to the absence of scientists like Seralini and Pushpa Bhargava. These two so-called scientific jokers will not allowed set foot in the real world of science in North America . They have a heyday in countries like India because of ignoramuses" (Shanthu Shantharam in comments thread here).

Meaning: Poisoned, de-nutrified food,degraded soil and unsustainable agriculture is ideal and anyone who challenges this will be ridiculed and smeared.

7) These anti-GM campaigners are "murdering bastards." (Patrick Moore)

Meaning: Can't hold an objective debate? Insults will suffice.

8) You are presenting "anti-capitalist twaddle."

Patrick Moore@EcoSenseNow

@colin_todhunter @GMWatch How about “anti-capitalist twaddle” or “anti-globalization twaddle” or “Occupy-twaddle”?

11:33 AM – 11 Apr 2015

Meaning: Who needs rational debate when baseless clichés will suffice? I don’t want to hear about the destruction of indigenous agriculture by the West with its ‘aid’, ‘structural adjustment’ and agribusiness companies because this analysis does not suit with my agenda (the above tweet was in response to this analysis).

9) Glyphosate is harmless and I will drink it.

Meaning: No it isn’t and I won’t, but you are a “jerk” for calling my bluff.

10) I don’t take money from Monsanto.

Meaning: OK, maybe it happened but they were advised not to make the cheque out to me.

11) You are just victimising me and I am scared.

Meaning: I got caught out but will play the sympathy card.

12) Preventing GM will hold back Indian agriculture and the availability of cheap food.

Meaning: I spout uninformed personal opinion but my expertise as a molecular biologist qualifies me to speak as ‘an expert’ on anything.

13) People with authoritarian personality types anda political agenda are harming the poor by imposing their views on everyone – similar attitudes have killed millions under totalitarian regimes.

Meaning: Highly emotive. But, hey, as a molecular biologist, I am a self-appointed expert on psychology, politics and history.

14) There is a scientific consensus on the safety of GMOs.

Meaning: No there isn’t, but if I repeat the mantra often enough people will believe it.

15) The debate on GM is over.

Meaning: No it isn’t, but if I repeat the mantra often enough people will believe it (instruction to lobbyist: employ same tactic regarding no risks, better yields, GM is no different from conventional and so on).

16) With so much land under GM, farmers are actively choosing this technology.

Meaning: We love ‘free’ market platitudes about ‘choice’ and everyone should just ignore US intimidation tactics to get GM into countries, the closing-off of choice as GM becomes the only available option, strings-attached loans in Ukraine to force through GM agriculture, the buying-up of seed companies , financial incentives to plant GM, etc.

17) We care about the poor and hungry.

Meaning: Benefits for the poor should be cut and these people should rely on food stamps and food banks… but we really, really do care about the poor in Africa or India!

18) Labelling GM food will confuse people and send out the wrong impression.

Meaning: People do not have any right to know what they are eating – if they knew, they wouldn't buy it!

This article discusses the corporate spin behind GMO and this one is another satirical take on the GM lobby.

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