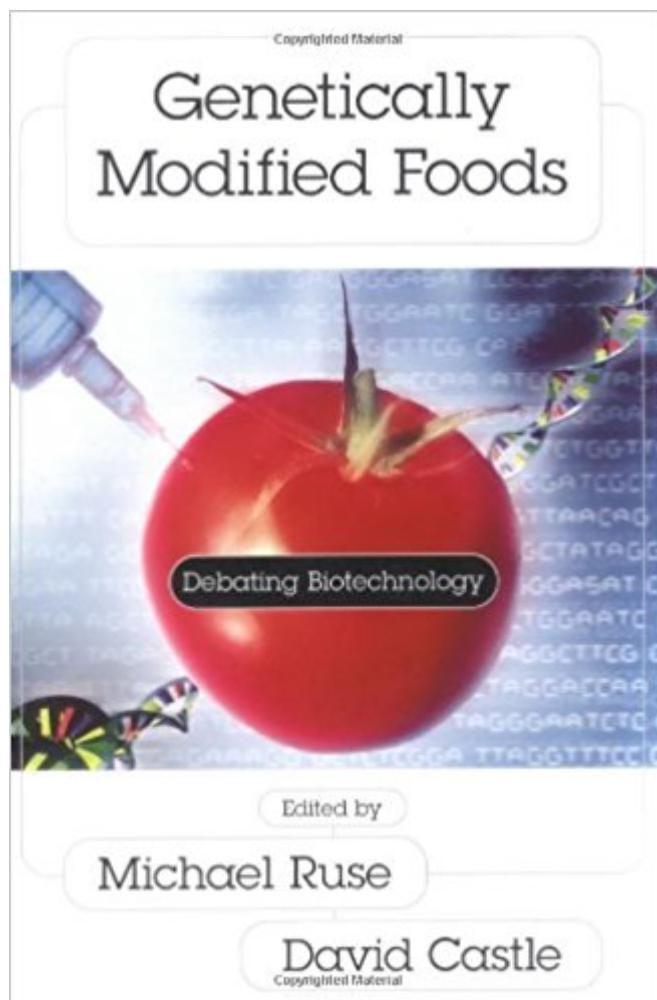


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# Genetically Modified Foods: Debating Biotechnology (Contemporary Issues (Prometheus))



## **Synopsis**

Finally, the real story about corporate America with its increased reliance on consultants. Since the 1990s, consulting solutions have become the de facto standard for solving business problems and providing cover for corporate decision makers. This is not the typical CEO whitewash, or business management primer. Steve Romaine offers a view never before shared with management or stockholders as he takes a hired gun's journey beginning at the outside looking in, and ending at the pinnacle of a corporation's power. Based on his experience of working for IBM, his later role as a self-employed consultant, and finally his responsibilities as senior vice president for NationsBank, Romaine makes it clear that the issues leading to the collapse of Enron were not isolated events. Soldier of Fortune 500 explores corporate cronyism between executives and their consultants, and builds a convincing case of how, without the proper safeguards, such cozy relationships can lead to pervasive problems, placing stockholders, employees, and the future viability of the American corporation at risk. This book is a must read for corporate managers, employees, and anyone involved with the consulting business.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"...a well-edited compilation of opinions concerning genetically modified foods." -- The Futurist, August 2003 "...could be used fruitfully as a textbook..." -- Quarterly Review of Biology, September 2003 "...outstanding collection...comprehensive introduction and reference work to an important

technology with worldwide social consequences." -- AgBioView, February 18, 2003"..."...packed with important observations and facts." -- Bookwatch, May 2003"I enjoyed the book and recommend it...the pieces are lively, well-written, informative, insightful and measured and cogent." -- Alternative Journal, Fall 2003

Steve Romaine (Fairfield, CT), now an independent consultant, has held high-level consulting and managerial positions with KPMG Consulting, The Monitor Company, NationsBank, Informed Technology Decisions, and IBM.

Since this book has "debating" in the title you would think that it would provide a balance of both pro and con viewpoints on the subject of genetically modified foods. I did not find this to be the case. The majority of essays in this book are pro genetically modified foods. Also, several of the pro GMO authors have ties to companies with an economic stake in GMO foods, like Monsanto, that are not disclosed. This significantly damages these authors' credibility. I would not recommend this book if you are looking for a well-rounded exploration of this subject.

I'm a graduate student in philosophy of science; I'm reviewing this book as a possible textbook for a course I'm developing on philosophical issues surrounding food. I give it a qualified recommendation, and it's the best textbook I've found for a class that doesn't focus primarily on GMOs. (For this review, by GMOs I mean the agricultural and culinary use of organisms whose genome has been directly and deliberately modified, often by the 'splicing' of genes from other species.) This is an anthology, comprising 35 readings in 8 parts (plus introductions by the editors to each part). The selection of readings is comprehensive -- almost all of the major ethical issues related to GMOs are covered with at least a few readings. On the other hand, many of the readings are short, and several are just 3-4 pages long. They would be more appropriate for first-year and sophomore undergraduates, but more advanced students may be dissatisfied with the brevity. With the exception of a single very technical article, the readings deal pretty much exclusively with ethical rather than epistemological issues; for a philosophy of science class, I would recommend supplementing this book with, for example, the executive summaries of National Academies reports on what we know about the health, safety, and environmental impact of GMOs. Roughly half of the readings are written by academics in a professional capacity (eg, bioethicists and molecular biologists); the other half are written by activists and pundits (or by people writing in that capacity). Unsurprisingly, many of the latter sort are sloppy, disingenuous, and/or polemical; this is the primary

reason I did not give the book 5 stars. I would probably either leave these readings out or assign them sparingly for critical thinking purposes. The notion of 'balance' in presentation is controversial among philosophers and historians of science these days, with some people arguing that it is inappropriate to present scientific controversies in a 'balanced' or 'fair' way. However, I am inclined to think that 'balance' is appropriate, at least in teaching the GMO controversy. Some parts of this anthology are not balanced, and I consider this a mild-to-moderate vice. For example, all three of the readings in the part on labelling argue against labelling, and all three of the readings on patent and international law are critical of the current regimes for handling GMOs. Overall, however, the selection of readings seems to be balanced -- the pro-GMO parts balancing with the GMO-skeptical parts -- and it certainly does a good job of bringing out the complex array of values that are relevant to GMOs. It's worthwhile and appropriate to compare this anthology with two other prominent anthologies on the same topic: *The Ethics of Food: A Reader for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Pence, and *Ethical Issues in Biotechnology*, edited by Sherlock and Morrey. I find Pence's anthology to be quite poor: despite the title, it deals largely with GMOs; the readings are not at all balanced (it's heavily skewed in favor of GMOs); and there are almost no readings by philosophers or pieces written by academics in a professional capacity. Sherlock and Morrey is an extremely thorough and involved anthology, covering GMOs and some related issues of biotechnology (eg, cloning). Many of their readings are 10-20 pages long, and their introductions to each part make a reasonable effort to explain the relevant science. I recommend Sherlock and Morrey for a class that spends at least half of a semester on GMOs, or an advanced undergraduate class, and Ruse and Castle for class that spends 3-6 weeks on GMOs. Finally, a few small notes. The binding on my copy seems a little flimsy; I worry that it would not survive a single semester completely intact, much less regular use over several years. It's quite inexpensive, and published by a small and eclectic press. First published in 2002, it's occasionally a bit dated, and undergraduates today are unlikely to remember the public controversy over Golden Rice and protestors dressed up as monarch butterflies.

used it as a text book in an undergraduate class of introduction to biotechnology and loved it. yes it is more pro but it got our class talking and most essays were understandable.

How are genetically altered foods affecting daily lives, and are genetically changed materials becoming a part of our genetic makeup through digestion of these foods? *Genetically Modified Foods* explores the myriad of issues and argument arising from the use of genetically modified

foods, offering chapters which cover their history, science, and health concerns. Over thirty essays are contributed by experts in science, law, religion and public policy, making a guide which is packed with important observations and facts.

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