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UNH Hosts Public Forum on Genetically Modified Plants

By [Sharon Keeler](#)
UNH News Bureau

February 19, 2001

DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire hosts its first Controversial Issues Symposium, "A Public Forum on Plant Biology and Genetically Modified Organisms," Friday, March 2. The forum, aimed to raise public awareness about biotechnology and encourage informed decision-making about the plants we grow and foods we eat, takes place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Johnson Theater in the Paul Creative Arts Center.

The event is free (with lunch provided); however tickets are required. They may be obtained from the UNH Agricultural Experiment Station office by calling 862-1452 or by sending email to bill.trumble@unh.edu. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

The symposium will deal with biotechnology and genetic engineering, and their applications to agriculture, particularly to food crops. Information on plant biotechnology will be covered and presentations will focus on promising applications, environmental concerns, and social and ethical issues raised by recent developments in plant biotechnology.

Different visions and concerns for genetically modified organisms (GMOs), including ownership, patenting of cells and organisms, and the release of GMOs will be considered. The audience will be invited to ask questions following each presentation and during the panel discussion.

According to Bill Trumble, director of the N.H. Agricultural Experiment Station and associate dean for research at UNH's College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, it is the university's plan that this will be the first in a series of annual symposiums "that will bring to campus a group of experts to provide unbiased

information on one of the year's most controversial issues."

The agenda for this year's symposium is as follows:

9 to 9:30 a.m.	Welcome and introductions
9:30 to 10:30 a.m.	The Gene-ing of America (Dr. Philip Berger, University of Idaho)
10:30 to 11:30 a.m.	Current and future applications (Dr. James Siedow, Duke University, N.C.)
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Lunch (provided)
1 to 1:45 p.m.	Social, ethical and ownership aspects (Dr. Hope Shand, Research Director, Research Advancement Foundation International, N.C.)
1:45 to 2:30 p.m.	Ecological benefits and risks (Dr. LaReesa Wolfenbarger, Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C.)
2:30 to 4 p.m.	Panel discussion (speakers, plus the following participants, will answer questions. Steve Taylor, N.H. commissioner of agriculture, Subhash Minocha, director, UNH biology program, and Tom Kelly, director, UNH Office of Sustainability.)

The Controversial Issues Symposium is sponsored by the N.H. Agricultural Experiment Station, the UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, the UNH

Office of the Vice President for Research and Public
Service, and the UNH Office of Sustainability
Programs.

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