



## Pro-GMO debaters win over NYC crowd

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The debate swirling around genetically modified foods was literally on display last night in New York City, in a terrifically enlightening and well-produced event held by *intelligence2 debates*, where the high-profile proceedings swayed an engaged packed house that embracing GMO foods –and the science which supports its production — is the better choice for the United States and the world at large.

An audience of hundreds at the Kaufman Center near Lincoln Center was ultimately convinced by the shared argument put forth by Robert Fraley, a senior Monsanto executive, and Alison Van Eenennaam, Genomics and Biotechnology Researcher at UC Davis. In his 30+ years with the company, Fraley, Exec. VP and Chief Technology Officer, is charged with overseeing Monsanto’s “global technology division, which includes plant breeding, biotechnology and crop protection research,” according to bio notes distributed to the media.

Making the case against the use of GM farming and produce was Charles Benbrook, Research Professor for the Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources. An advisory committee member to the USDA since 2011, Benbrook issued a widely-read, 2012 peer-reviewed study documenting the “big increase in herbicide use triggered by the planting of genetically engineered crops in the U.S.,” according to his bio. He was joined by Margaret Mellon, Science Policy Consultant and former Senior Scientist for the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The debate’s unique format provided an interesting measurement of persuasiveness, as explained to the audience by John Donvan, the evening’s masterful moderator. The ABC News correspondent produced a lively dialogue by expertly steering the conversation to ensure that it remained on point, as well as strictly and unapologetically holding the participants to their allotted times. The audience, which included Bill Nye “The Science Guy,” was initially polled as to their leanings, and then again at the debate’s conclusion. In the course of 100 minutes, the percentage of the those in favor of GMO science shot up from 32 to 60 percent. Those opposed inched up just a single percent, from 30 to 31 percent. (The remainder weighed in as undecided.)

To see how the debaters made their respective cases, and how the evening unfolded, [click here](#).

Also, for sound science-based information about agricultural biotechnology, see [ACSH’s recent publications](#) on the subject.