

## Rhetorical Analysis of Monsanto's "Unlocking Hidden Potential: Biotechnology and GMOs" and the University of Utah's Genetic Science Learning Center's "Genetically Modified Foods"

Monsanto is one of the most well-known chemical corporations involved in researching and producing genetically modified organisms (GMOs). They have been widely criticized for their business practices for decades, most notably for their development and sale of Agent Orange, a chemical used widely in the Vietnam War cited as the cause of many ill health effects. The article being discussed is from Monsanto's website.

The Genetic Science Learning Center (GSLC) at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City publishes a wide variety of educational materials and programs to make scientific information available to the public in an easy-to-understand format.

Considering that Monsanto has a corporate interest in convincing the public that GMOs are safe for humans to consume and safe for the environment, it is expected that their article would put a very positive spin on the topic. Conversely, GSLC appears to have no purpose for writing their article other than to provide general information on the subject for public understanding.

The Monsanto article is written primarily for their customers and shareholders, while the GSLC article is written for students, educators, and the public. Both pieces are well-written and easy for the general public to understand. The GSLC article used images appropriate to a scientific discussion, including an infographic providing a simple explanation of scientists injecting bacterium genes into a tomato plant. Monsanto's article uses photos with bright, happy colors depicting plants, fresh fruit, fields, and people and includes a video explaining "How GMOs Benefit Farmers."

The graphic choices in the Monsanto article leave the reader with a sense that GMOs are no different than traditional foods and that the use of GMOs makes the world a better place. This supports their corporate bias and desire to maintain a positive image for their company and its products. GSLC maintains a reasonably balanced treatment of the topic, posing questions at the beginning of the article to lead the reader to consider that there may be benefits to using GMOs. Later in the article, several concerns are noted, including the potential for GMO crops to inadvertently crossbreed with non-GMO plants and the possibility that GMOs could cause toxicity or allergic reactions in some people.

Monsanto emphasizes that its GMO products are rigorously tested and safe for human consumption, including selected brief quotes from several respected organizations attesting that there are likely no risks involved with human consumption of GMO foods. GSLC neither supports nor denies these claims but instead acknowledges that there is controversy and encourages the reader to take responsibility for learning more about the topic so they can make informed decisions involving the use and regulation of GMOs.

#### References

- Monsanto Company. (n.d.). Unlocking hidden potential: biotechnology and GMOs. Retrieved from [monsanto.com/innovations/biotech-gmos/](https://www.monsanto.com/innovations/biotech-gmos/)
- Genetic Science Learning Center. (n.d.). Genetically modified foods. Retrieved from [learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/science/gmfoods/](https://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/science/gmfoods/)