**Genetically Engineered Foods**

**Class activity for Chapter 6**

***Food, Farms and Community***

**Material Requirements: None**

**Time Requirement: 60 minutes**

Few issues have captured the attention and imagination of food activists as has genetic modification of food plants and animals. This activity is aimed at expanding students’ awareness of genetic modification. Break your class into two groups, one of which will build a case for the deregulation and broad adoption of genetic modification technologies and food varieties, while the other will build a case against them. Students should be randomly assigned so their preconceptions don’t prevent their thorough investigation of the issues.

It can be useful to provide some guidance to both groups before they begin their research. Both teams should prepare themselves to discuss the topic on multiple levels: 1) health concerns—what is the evidence that GMO food products are hazardous to eat? 2) Ecology: do GMO crops tend to increase or decrease the use of pesticides and herbicides; do they damage surrounding ecosystems? 3) Economic: what will result from industry ownership of genes and seed stocks? How will industry control affect farmers in poor countries? All things considered, does the weight of the evidence suggest that GMO seed will cause no irreversible harm? Students should document their claims thoroughly and use recognized sources. This research should culminate in an in-class debate, the format of which should be tailored to the class and its students. After the debate, discuss what values are transcendent on each side of the argument.