

GOLDEN RICE

The nonsense concerning Golden Rice to prevent blindness in children

There has been a misleading story peddled by some in the gene-tech industry and also by a few who work at the CSIRO in Australia. These people claim that they intend to genetically engineer a variety of rice called GOLDEN RICE.

This Golden Rice is supposed to carry massive amounts of vitamin A. This rice with the vitamin A is to be fed to people in the so-called third world and then millions of children will not suffer blindness because of their deficiency in vitamin A.

It is a pity that some of these technologists can't be a little more honest. I have no problem with technology as such. It is technology that gave us the non-stick frypan and how could we live without that – even if most of us have long since eaten the non-stick Teflon off the non-stick pan.

There is a humble plant called chicory. Chicory is often of a dark green colour and grows very easily and is somewhat like lettuce but it has a blue flower, whereas lettuce has a yellow flower. Chicory leaf probably carries more vitamin A than any other plant. Chicory also contains lots of iron and many other vitamins and minerals.

Our own CSIRO in Australia knows a lot about chicory, as they did research on chicory by feeding it to lambs and found that the lambs did amazingly on chicory – something like doubling their size in half the time; just because of the chicory.

Since that research we have not heard a squeak about that chicory/lamb experiment but i did hear one scientist from the CSIRO say that they intended to genetically modify sheep so as they would grow larger faster.

Perhaps the problem with chicory is that it is easy to grow. My guess is that a garden plot of about 60cm by 60cm or about 2ft by 2ft would produce enough chicory to keep a family supplied with more vitamin A than they would ever need - meaning that they would have in their diet all the vitamin A they need and many other vitamins and minerals, year in, year out.

Perhaps we should not talk about chicory because it is not a high-tech solution and anyone can afford it. A small plot of chicory and about 1 to 3 jugs of water per week, depending on the weather, is all you need. A little raw chicory chopped into meals from time to time would load a child with vitamin A; perhaps it's TOO simple.

Another huge problem with chicory is that there are no patents involved for Monsanto or Bayer because it is not Genetically Manipulated and so no person owns the DNA by law; oh bother!

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