



2nd Annual Biotechnology Literacy Project Bootcamp

World Food Center Institute for Food and Agricultural Literacy

University of California-Davis | May 31-June 2

Optional related public and private events on June 3 & 4

When it comes to views on food and agricultural biotechnology, the public is divided. And because food is such a visceral issue, emotional appeals and scare campaigns can easily sway public opinion. What can be done to address legitimate concerns and raise the scientific literacy of the public and media?

Independent scientists can play a unique role in reframing the food safety and GMO debate to focus on science because the public holds them in such high esteem. They are poised to connect emotionally with environmentally-conscious individuals and with parents concerned about their children's health. However, scientists and other credible influencers often lack the resources, support, networking and training necessary to successfully engage in the discussion.

The **Biotechnology Literacy Project (BLP)** is dedicated to helping scientists and journalists work together to bring biotechnology to the public in a way that is accessible and persuasive. The Genetic Literacy Project and Academics Review, a 501c3 independent non-profit organization, are working in partnership with the University of California Davis to bring together academics, non-profit leaders, journalists, business owners, and scientists interested in improving the quality and accuracy of public dialogue on issues associated with agricultural biotechnology.

This program will take place as a friendly "boot camp" with a select group of participants on May 31-June 2, 2015 at the University of California in Davis. The BLP and the university's Institute for Food and Agricultural Literacy under the direction of Dr. Pam Ronald will hold a public event on Wednesday, June 3 and the World Food Center, led by Dr. Roger Beachy, will hold the inaugural event of the World Food Center the following day, Thursday, June 4. The BLP will be providing details soon and welcome you to extend your stay beyond the Bootcamp to these two optional events.

The first annual BLP was a "major success." One scientist noted that she rewrote a textbook chapter based on her experience. As one participant stated, "BLP gathered a critical mass of intellect and good will that can move it to the next level."

Our second BLP will feature discussions on the future of food, the problems and challenges facing GMOs, and on improving scientists' media skills. It will also reflect the global nature of agricultural biotechnology issues, management and influencers and will provide a foundation for ongoing support, future training programs, network expansion as we seek to extend and grow independent voices.

Participants will be drawn from various disciplines including plant and animal genetics, entomology, plant pathology, food science, nutrition, organic farming and intersecting disciplines. The BLP faculty will include internationally known scientists such as Kevin Folta, Alision van Eenennaam, Bruce Chassy and Pamela Ronald; social media expert Jay Byrne; representatives from AquaBounty, Arctic Apple, American Chestnut Research, and Simplot, and prominent journalists including the Genetic Literacy Project's Jon Entine, Grist's Nathaniel Johnson, Brooke Borel of Popular Science and Mark Lynas. The BLP also welcomes representatives from the Breakthrough Institute, Nature Conservancy and the Agricultural Development Advocacy group of the Gates Foundation. In addition, in cooperation with the USAID and the State Department, we expect to host international scientists and communicators.

All participants will be able to engage in broad communications skills training. They will hear from experts on the socio-political landscape, influencing public attitudes, and commercial strategies associated with agricultural and food biotechnology. Through both training and hands-on assistance, participants will develop the tools and support resources necessary to effectively engage the media and appear as experts in governmental policy-making and in outreach opportunities. Participants will have access to ongoing support via online tools and expert networking connections. The BLP faculty and staff will work with participants on individualized outreach plans that include staff-supported support and response activities through public events, publishing and media engagements.

Interested candidates should contact:

Stephanie (Steph) Gorski: Biotechnology Literacy Project Director
PhD candidate, Entomology, North Carolina State University
slgorski@ncsu.edu | (919) 332-1422

Jon Entine, Genetic Literacy Project Executive Director
jon@jonentine.com | (513) 319-8388