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Review of *Genetically Engineered Crops: Interim
Policies, Uncertain Legislation*. Edited by Iain E.P.
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Genetically Engineered Crops: Interim Policies, Uncertain Legislation. Edited by Iain E.P. Taylor. New York: Haworth Food & Agricultural Products Press, 2007. xxxii + 393 pp. Figures, tables, notes, index. \$89.95 cloth, \$59.95 paper.

At a time when the global commercialization of genetically engineered (GE) crops is growing exponentially and the range of GE traits continues a rapid expansion, Iain Taylor has compiled a number of provocative and perceptive essays on the regulation of GE crops from a cadre of international experts covering topics from science, to politics, to law and societal engagement. Many

of the essays concentrate on the differences between North American and European regulatory approaches. The fundamental basis for these differences, the volume makes clear, is the acceptance by North American governments of the contention that GE and non-GE cultivars are substantially equivalent. Yet convincing arguments are herein provided that there is little solid scientific and peer reviewed evidence to support this equivalence claim. For example, by 2001 there were fewer than 10 peer-reviewed studies published globally on the potential human health impacts resulting from the direct feeding of GE crops to food-producing animals. Moreover, it seems that the acceptance of substantial equivalence by regulators in the U.S. and Canada was not based on testing, but on dogmatic argument. In addition, Taylor asserts that governments in North America have difficulty separating the *promotion* of GE crops from their *regulation*, a position corroborated by K.A. Merrigan's account in chapter 11 of her experiences as a U.S. Senate staff aide in which she notes that substantial equivalence was viewed as a policy rather than a scientific principle.

The book also includes extensive considerations of the potential environmental impact of GE crops. Several authors argue that the commercialization of GE crops along with corporate amalgamation and control in the agroindustrial sector have linked these crops with the agroindustrial push for the simplification of agricultural systems that increasingly depend on technology for both fertility and plant protection, in contrast to systems inherently more robust because they include diversity in rotation as well as the types of crops included within such rotation.

Taylor has compiled a range of informed perspectives on ways to advance the regulation of GE crops, with examples from around the world. M. Korthals argues in chapter 6 for mechanisms that would allow for a coevolution of society and GE development, since the broadest benefits from GE crops, he holds, can only be realized if the fundamental basis for their regulations resides in societal participation. In chapter 7, Taylor echoes this call and asks what traits society might seek in GE crops and to what extent social desires would differ from the agroindustrial traits currently available or being developed. Society and the sustainable development of GE crops would be well served if everyone interested or involved in their development and regulation were to read this broad collection of in-depth essays.

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