

Friends of the Earth Europe is disappointed in the efforts of Jens Sundström and Torbjörn Fagerström to curtail the debate on the use genetically modified (GMO) crops and the impacts these have on biodiversity, rural communities and citizens. Their recycled stories from earlier this year are misleading and inaccurate.

We campaign at the heart of the European Union for sustainable solutions to benefit the planet, people and our future. Our work covers a wide area of environmental, social and development issues including climate change, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture and nature protection.

Friends of the Earth Europe receives funding to operate at the Brussels level under the “LIFE+ regulation” – approved by both the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. These funds are fully transparent, and all recipients are known and accountable to their objectives and to European taxpayers. It is therefore disingenuous to imply that this operating grant is solely used to fund our work on GMOs.

We, together with a growing number of scientists, agriculture experts and businesses, strongly believe that the use of genetically modified crops will not provide the solutions to the food, biodiversity and climate challenges that we face. In many cases the use of GM crops has been proven to make the situation worse by damaging biodiversity, increasing pesticide use, damaging the health of people living near GMO-plantations and increasing the corporate control of farming by biotech companies.

Science has an important role to play in the future direction of farming in order to meet the unprecedented challenges we face. However science is only part of the equation and should be used to guide society, not rule it. There is a growing urgency to shift our food and farming industries into an equitable, sustainable and resilient direction. Highly intensive GMO farming is not the answer, and holds little public support. Simply shooting one of the messengers, as the authors attempt to do, is not the answer.

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