U.S. Right to Know FOIA Communications Plan – *Updated: 7/25/2019*

Contents

Introduction & Situation

U.S. Right to Know (USRTK), an activist NGO that opposes the biotech industry, has submitted requests under state open records laws to academics at several universities. The requests seek copies of emails and other correspondence to and from the academics and representatives of Monsanto, BIO, CBI, various PR agencies and other companies involved in the ag-biotech space. USRTK plans to use information in these communications to attack Monsanto and the industry. The time period for the requests varies, but most begin Jan. 1, 2012, and runs through the date of the request.

USRTK founder Gary Ruskin has a history of exploiting open records laws to expose what he perceives as corruption or undue influence. He requests massive amounts of information, takes isolated pieces of information out of context, and then strings pieces of information together in news releases and other communications to paint a negative picture. He has stated his intention to "publish articles" on his website in a similar way with these records.

As we prepare, there are several key considerations:

- When and how USRTK will share the information is unknown – Possibilities include publishing an email a day/week to generate consistent and ongoing noise; compile all of the content into a large report with a full communications launch plan; features on each expert; features on each company; features by topic / allegation; etc.
- Content of some email correspondence is unknown – Most emails will be shared via copycat FOIA requests. We anticipate the focus will be on allegations about Monsanto's "undue influence" on the regulatory or policy process, contributions or payments from Monsanto to academics or their universities, unflattering or unprofessional comments or language written by Monsanto employees, and collaborations between an academic and a Monsanto employee on public communications or advocacy efforts.
- How much content will be published is unknown – The approach could be to print excerpts out of context, full length correspondence, etc.

USRTK's plan will impact the entire industry, and we will need to coordinate closely with BIO and CBI/GMOA throughout the planning process and on any eventual responses. We will need to be supportive of the independent experts who are being affected. And, we will need to prepare other associations (i.e. CFI, USFRA, CLI) and key stakeholders so there are no surprises and they are well positioned to provide support.

Web Pages:

- USRTK Calls for Investigation of Monsanto Cover Up, Harassment of USDA Scientists, Gary Ruskin, USRTK, March 30, 2015
- GMO Answers is a Marketing and PR Website for GMO Companies, Stacy Malkan, USRTK, March 26, 2015
- Who's Behind the Attacks on U.S. Right to Know?, Gary Ruskin, USRTK, March 13, 2015
- An Open Letter to Professor Kevin Folta on FOIA Requests, Gary Ruskin, USRTK, February 12, 2015
- U.S. Right to Know FOIAs Profs Who Wrote for GMO PR Website, Gary Ruskin, USRTK, February 11, 2015

Status

REQUEST	STATUS
Arizona State University – Law School - Gary Marchant	
Iowa State University - Ruth MacDonald - Mike Owen	
Mississippi State University - David Shaw	
North Carolina State University - Dominic Reisig	
Oklahoma State - Brett Carver	
Texas A&M - Julie Borlaug - Ed Runge	
University of California – Davis • Julian Alston √ (USRTK) • Kent Bradford √ (USRTK) • Colin Carter • Caitlin Cooper • Denneal Jamison-McClung • Martina Newell-McGloughlin √ • Pamela Ronald √ • Daniel Sumner √ (USRTK) • Neal Van Alfen • Alison Van Eenennaam √	**CURRENTLY BEING PULLED** We will have a pre-release view of documents; UC-Davis has not yet shared any documents with us.
University of California – Riverside • Alan McHughen √	NEW: Request for AH's docs; AH on sabbatical and could delay response *ACTION ITEM: Look at emails between AH and MON employees*
University of Florida • Alina Campbell Fernandez • Kevin Folta √ • Dennis Gray • Curtis Hannah • David Oppenheimer • Anna-Lisa Paul • Joy Rumble √ • Daniel Schmehl	**COMPLETE** All emails for Folta and Rumble released; we've printed and sorted.
University of Hawaii at Manoa • Mark Wright	
University of Idaho • Joe Guenther (no longer at	

university)	
University of Illinois • Bruce Chassy √ • Stephen Moose √	**COMPLETE** All emails released; we've printed and sorted. • UI rejected request for Chassy docs (1/1/13 to present) since he was retired. • Second request for docs (1/1/10-6/19/12) is being fulfilled; UI to send a file of these emails w/o 8/24.
University of Nebraska - Lincoln • Richard Goodman √	**CURRENTLY BEING PULLED** UNL denied request, but it was overturned by AG on USRTK appeal. UNL has received funding to gather the documents. We will have a pre-release view; we anticipate release could occur in November.
University of Oklahoma, College of Law • Drew Kershen √	We believe UO may have denied request due to retirement; we believe a new request was filed for docs prior to retirement.
University of Wyoming • Andrew Kniss	
Virginia Tech • Shawn Askew	No (3/6/15)
Washington State University • Shelley McGuire √	**CURRENTLY BEING PULLED** NEW: 7/27/15 Request for SM docs after breast milk study. *ACTION ITEM: Look at emails between SM and MON employees*

Key Contacts

	Contact	Office	Mobile	Email
Law	Kris Ramaraju	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
	Brian Lowry	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
	Stacey Stater	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
	Mary Tonkin	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
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	Melissa Duncan	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
	Sam Murphey	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
	Chelsey Robinson	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
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Business Communications	Sara Miller	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
Digital Strategy	Kate Humphrey	314-[redacted]	314-[redacted]	[redacted]@monsanto.com
GMO Answers	Kate Hall	202-[redacted]	571-[redacted]	[redacted]@bio.org
	Juliet Johnson	202-[redacted]	202-[redacted]	[redacted]@ketchum.com
BIO	Karen Batra	202-[redacted]		[redacted]@bio.org

Action Items

CATEGORY	STATUS / NEXT STEPS
Academic List / Email Records	• ***In Progress***: Emailed Byrne for full list of FOIA'd academics • ***In Progress***: Kris is requesting additional emails (Alan McHughen, Shelley McGuire, Rick Goodman) • **ACTIONABLE:** Wrap up email review and file / bind • **ACTIONABLE:** Set up meetings with each key employee to review emails and develop spreadsheet with messaging strategies • **ACTIONABLE:** What is the connection between MON and ILSI
Viewpoints	• **ACTIONABLE**: Edit existing copy: (1) Bolster language on transparency and collaboration, (2) Incorporate edits from Connie, (2) address newly identified themes/subject areas: funding /restricted/unrestricted grants; Monsanto's undue influence on regulatory or policy process; contributions or payments from Monsanto to academics and universities; unflattering or unprofessional comments by Monsanto employees; collaborations between an academic and Monsanto employee on communications or advocacy effort • **ACTIONABLE:** Add media statements and QAs • **ACTIONABLE:** Add "What Others are Saying" Clean up the list in the plan … what is valuable to share? Add media clips from Charla and Chelsey's clips from the IPE newsletter
Societal Page	• ***In Progress:*** Digital team is condensing list content into infographic that captures the different buckets of how we work with academia. • **ACTIONABLE:** Gather list of academics and universities we work with and on what projects as part of the disclosure initiative. • ***In Progress:*** Digital team expanding section on safety and product performance review to demonstrate that by working with universities we are enhancing the safety and performance review process and improving the transparency around our product safety/performance. • ***In Progress:*** Digital team creating a blog post for Discover about an impactful project made possible through collaboration
Beyond the Rows	• ***In Progress:*** Write post that addresses the FOIA request and tells the story of how working with academics improves transparency, fosters dialog, provides additional checkpoints that improve the review of our product safety. • ***In Progress:*** Draft social media share copy for blog posts.
Discover	• ***In Progress:*** Write post that tells the story about the impact of a project (one that resonates well with a societal audience) that was made possible through the collaboration of Monsanto and Academia (the more complete and public the project the better). • ***In Progress:*** Draft social media share copy for blog posts.
Media / Social Media Monitoring	• **ACTIONABLE:** Share weekly report with core team.
Proactive Societal Engagement	• **ACTIONABLE**: Leverage the collaboration pillar. Work with the editorial board team to develop and promote additional content that

	tells the story of how collaboration with academics fosters dialog and only serves to further improve the safety of our products and procedures. Provide examples of one or more positive impacts/projects that resulted from the collaboration of Monsanto and academics/universities. Develop a proactive inventory of programs that we do in each area. Add a component that is supportive of public-private collaboration, academic freedom, etc. • ***In Progress:*** Follow up with Kate / James on developing a video about how we work with academics
Industry Alignment	• **ACTIONABLE:** Reach back out to / request talking points and online positioning from CFI, CLA, CLI, IFIC, Ketchum, USFRA • **ACTIONABLE:** Update CBI resources and messaging in the plan for quick use and reference
Academic Support	• ***In Progress:*** Emailed Byrne about academic interest in agency / communications support • **ACTIONABLE:** Develop a list of key relationship owners; hold a brainstorm to identify additional needs • ***In Progress:*** Kate Hall (CBI) checking on APLU / CARET • ***In Progress:*** Kate Hall / Ketchum developing plan to amplify USDA extension service … consider asking Robb to engage Horsch • **ACTIONABLE:** Ask Connie to pursue letter with Brett and University of Missouri • ***In Progress:*** Eric checking with Wendy Winterstein and Peter Raven • **ACTIONABLE:** Determine how to amplify Entine first person essays
Media Engagement	• ***In Progress:*** Charla pulling list of reporters who cover FOIA; potential people to pitch • ***In Progress*:** Pull together a LTE strategy; include Eric and Robb • **ACTIONABLE:** Add all of the talking points to the plan • **ACTIONABLE:** Further brainstorm the QA
Employee Support	• ***In Progress:*** Emailed Mica regarding employee questions / concerns • **ACTIONABLE:** Develop a CBT on document retention and email writing • **ACTIONABLE:** Meet with affected / high-risk teams re: emails and next steps
Transparency Initiative	• ***In Progress:*** Tami is providing guidance on reporting university giving in our corporate sustainability report.

Communication Objectives

- Protect our reputation and FTO by proactively providing context for the legitimate, appropriate and positive collaboration between Monsanto, industry and these academics
- Protect these valuable stakeholder relationships by allowing the academics to see us standing up on their behalf in support of scientific and academic freedom
- Standing with the industry, position this activist tactic as an attack on scientific integrity and academic freedom
- Condemn any publication of Monsanto business confidential information

- Distance Monsanto from any inappropriate or immature comments or unethical behavior by individual employees

Key Audiences

- Media / general public
- Academic researcher & allies (those included in FOIA & others)
- Monsanto employees (those included in FOA & others)
- Industry & societal stakeholders
- Regulators

Strategy

Monsanto should engage proactively to drive one consistent and unified message about the legitimate, appropriate and positive collaboration among our company, the industry and these academics. We should get ahead of the activist rhetoric by proactively telling our story on our own terms. Our strategy should give us a central point for sharing information and resources and offer the flexibility to adapt and amplify as needed. To the extent possible and helpful, our strategy should align with the industry's approach.

Our strategy should include four major components:

1. A two-pronged digital approach that is both proactive and reactive. We should use our own digital channels to share and shape our positive story proactively with both consumer and specific audiences – beginning in advance of any document disclosure by USRTK. This approach is detailed below.

2. Strong, proactive stakeholder engagement, including engagement with our academic partners and the industry. We should share our proactive messaging through the digital hub with our key academic and industry partners. We want our allies to see Monsanto taking a strong stance in support of our partners and academic freedom. We also want our partners to be able to share the link to our key messages and resources through their digital and social channels.

3. A proactive media approach that uses the digital hub to frame the story with key reporters. We should take a bold media approach to tell our side of the story. As noted above, we should proactively share the digital hub with key reporters and stakeholders and work with any reporters who would like to write on the topic. Ideally, we will do this in advance of any document release by USRTK in an attempt to proactively influence the tone of the coverage.

   Reactively, we should be prepared with a responsive statement and Q&As (see below) to respond to any inquiries. If needed, we should consider reviewing, redacting and uploading documents to the digital hub if we need to put isolated quotes or comments in a broader context. We will outline a more detailed media approach below.

4. Employee communications, as appropriate. In coordination with the employee communications team, we should develop content based on actual document disclosures and related social media conversation or mainstream coverage. The employee communications team is fully briefed and prepared to engage as necessary.

5. Demonstrate complete transparency in how we work with academics. Work with teams internally to develop a comprehensive report of our university giving that is compatible with Sustainability Reporting.

Tactics

Proactive and Reactive Digital Approach

Expected Activist Narratives:
Given the past behavior of USRTK as well as the information that was made available as a result of the FOIA request, the activists and media are expected to spin one or more of the following narratives:

1. Monsanto donates and gifts large amounts of money to high impact academics as a means to influence industry behavior and acceptance of our products (Monsanto pays academics to act as shills).
2. Monsanto influences or activates academics to disparage reports/studies that criticize or question the safety of our products.
3. Monsanto uses undue influence or money to fast track the approval of our products, handpicking academics to find favorable results and eschew safety when testing our products.

Response:
In order to combat these narratives, Monsanto needs a two-pronged approach, both societal and issues based, that tells our overall story around transparency and collaboration when working with academics as well as addresses the specific allegations that stem from the USRTK FOIA request. Proactively we want to address activist narrative themes head on and before they go viral or trend with societal audience. In order to do this we must:

- Demonstrate complete transparency in how we work with academics
- Tell the story of how collaboration with academics fosters dialog and only serves to further improve the safety of our products and procedures
- Provide an example of one or more positive impacts/projects that resulted from the collaboration of Monsanto and academics/universities

1. **Monsanto.com / Improving Ag (Societal Focused):** Establish a proactive Collaborating with Academics and Universities page in the Improving Agriculture section of Monsanto.com, under What is Monsanto Doing to Help?, to proactively tell our story about why we work with academics, the benefits derived from such collaborations, and details on how we traditionally work with universities.
    - Academic Collaborations: http://www.monsanto.com/improvingagriculture/pages/collaborating-with-academics-and-universities.aspx
    - *ACTION ITEM: Condense list content into infographic that captures the different buckets of how we work with academia. Consider adding a list of academics and universities we work with and on what projects. Expand section on safety and product performance review to demonstrate that by working with universities we are enhancing the safety and performance review process and improving the transparency around our product safety/performance.*

2. **Monsanto.com / Viewpoints (Issues Related)**: Establish a dedicated "hub" in the Viewpoints section of Monsanto.com: Collaboration is Key to Nourishing a Growing World: Our Response to the special interest group U.S. Right to Know. Address topics specifically related to the USRTK FOIA request including sections for our statement, "What others are saying," third-party links and specific responsive

statements or documents if needed. As needed, redact and upload documents to the digital hub to put isolated quotes or comments in a broader context.

- Viewpoints: http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/response-to-right-to-know.aspx
- *ACTION ITEM: Update / expand this section to include statements, QA, links, page per topic (very valuable asset for SEO purposes and for responding to current and future social conversations; total transparency). Specifically add content on the unrestricted grant, our media statement on Folta, edits from Connie, What Others are Saying. Capture the following 4 topics as well: Monsanto's undue influence on regulatory or policy process; contributions or payments from Mon to academics and universities; unflattering or unprofessional comments by Mon employees; collaborations between an academic and Mon employee on communications or advocacy effort.*

3. **Traditional and Social Media Monitoring :** Work with the Fusion Center to monitor USRTK digital properties, the volume and sentiment related to USRTK/FOIA, as well as audience engagement. Share weekly report with core team.

4. **Proactive Societal Engagement:** Share the Improving Agriculture web page through Monsanto's social media channels, along with other third-party and existing messages about how Monsanto collaborates with others. Messaging for consumers will be high level and reinforce the positive aspects of Monsanto's relationship with academics and universities. The proactive approach for society will center around the collaboration pillar and the benefits it brings to society.
   - *ACTION ITEM: Work with the editorial board team to develop and promote additional content that tells the story of how collaboration with academics fosters dialog and only serves to further improve the safety of our products and procedures. Provide examples of one or more positive impacts/projects that resulted from the collaboration of Monsanto and academics/universities. Develop a proactive inventory of programs that we do in each area. Add a component that is supportive of public-private collaboration, academic freedom, etc.*
   - *ACTION ITEM: Write a blog post (Discover) that tells the story about the impact of a project (one that resonates well with a societal audience) that was made possible through the collaboration of Monsanto and Academia (the more complete and public the project the better).*
   - *ACTION ITEM: Write a blog post (BTR) that states upfront the FOIA request, what they'll find and why we do it that way. The post should come from a Monsanto employee and focus on how our collaborations with academics only serves to improve transparency, foster dialog, and provide additional checkpoints that improves the review of our product safety. Link blog post to Issues article (and vice versa).*
   - *ACTION ITEM: Draft social media share copy for blog posts (Discover and BTR)*

   Draft Tweets:
   - Public-private collaboration is key to improving ag. Read more. http://www.monsanto.com/improvingagriculture/pages/collaborating-with-academics-and-universities.aspx
   - Read about how Monsanto collaborates with university researchers. http://www.monsanto.com/improvingagriculture/pages/collaborating-with-academics-and-universities.aspx
   - Monsanto collaborates with university researchers, others to improve ag. Read more. http://www.monsanto.com/improvingagriculture/pages/collaborating-with-academics-and-universities.aspx

- Monsanto supports academic research, education to improve ag. Read more. http://www.monsanto.com/improvingagriculture/pages/collaborating-with-academics-and-universities.aspx
- Public-private partnerships critical to improving ag. Read more about our collaborations. http://www.monsanto.com/improvingagriculture/pages/collaborating-with-academics-and-universities.aspx

5. **Reactive Societal Engagement:** Should FOIA become a highly visible issue with consumers, we will shift our communication from the proactive approach to leverage the Viewpoints page, BTR blog post and the more issue-related approach for media, industry, etc. If needed, prepare subpages to the USRTK FOIA hub that address specific allegations that are trending in social media – these pages should use strong SEO to gain ideal placement in search results. If individual academics start trending/go viral subpages should be created to address and clarify our relationship with those individuals – this should be a last resort as creating a page defending these relationships only compounds the argument that they are 'in Monsanto's pocket'.

   Draft Tweets / Monsanto Content:
   - Solving big challenges requires big collaborations. Monsanto supports public-private partnerships to improve ag. Read more. http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/response-to-right-to-know.aspx
   - Collaboration is key to improving ag. Monsanto proud to partner with university researchers. Read more. http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/response-to-right-to-know.aspx
   - Monsanto collaborates with university researchers in many ways to improve ag. Read more. http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/response-to-right-to-know.aspx
   - More info about how Monsanto really collaborates with researchers to improve ag. http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/response-to-right-to-know.aspx
   - Grants are just one way we collaborate w/ researchers to improve ag. Read more. http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/response-to-right-to-know.aspx

   Draft Tweets / Third-Party Content:
   - GMO Answers: What is the GMO industry trying to hide? https://gmoanswers.com/studies/what-gmo-industry-trying-hide
   - Science Magazine: Updated: Agricultural researchers rattled by demands for documents from group opposed to GM foods http://news.sciencemag.org/scientific-community/2015/02/agricultural-researchers-rattled-demands-documents-group-opposed-gm
   - Science Magazine: Open records laws becoming vehicle for harassing academic researchers, report warns http://news.sciencemag.org/policy/2015/02/open-records-laws-becoming-vehicle-harassing-academic-researchers-report-warns
   - Columbia Journalism Review: Why Scientists Often Hate Records Requests http://www.cjr.org/the_observatory/why_scientists_often_hate_reco.php
   - The Guardian: The anti-GM lobby appears to be taking a page out of the Climategate playbook http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/09/gm-opponents-are-science-deniers
   - Union of Concerned Scientists: Freedom to Bully: How Laws Intended to Free Information Are Used to Harass Researchers (2015) http://www.ucsusa.org/center-science-and-democracy/protecting-scientists-harassment/freedom-bully-how-laws#.VcOZcqwo6Ul

6. **Third-Party Resources:** Maintain a list of key online resources that can be leveraged with stakeholders, in the "What Others Are Saying" section, in social media, etc. *ACTION ITEM: Research this a bit more; include media clips from Charla; include Chelsey's clips from IPE newsletter; sort these links.*

Valuable to Share:

FYI Only / Not Shareable:

- Editorial: Being honest about GMOs, The Gainesville Sun, August 25, 2015
- Op-Ed: Why it's OK for taxpayers to 'snoop' on scientists, Charles Seife and Paul Thacker, Los Angeles Times, August 21, 2015
- Casualty of GMO Wars, Colleen Flaherty, Inside Higher Ed, August 14, 2015 *(includes MON POV)*
- Transparency is Great, Harassment is Worth Preventing: A Response to Paul Thacker and Charles Seife, Aaron Huertas, Union of Concerned Scientists, August 14, 2015; Updates
- Post Removed by PLOS – The Fight Over Transparency: Round Two, PLOS Biologue, August 13, 2015
- Following criticism, PLOS removes blog defending scrutiny of science, Retraction Watch
- How to Lose Your University Job, Scott Jaschik, Inside Higher Ed (repurposed on Slate.com), August 11, 2015
- Nutritionist Michelle McGuire responds to attacks in wake of 'glyphosate not in milk' study, Michelle McGuire, Genetic Literacy Project, August 11, 2015
- Environmental Groups Continue Their Harassment of Scientists, Organic Food News Today, August 7, 2015
- GM crops: Close ties between industry and academics raise concerns, Jayalakshmi K, International Business Times, August 7, 2015 (Also picked up by Yahoo News)
- GM-crop opponents expand probe into ties between scientists and industry, Keith Kloor, Nature, August 6, 2015
- Environmental Groups Continue Their Harassment of Scientists, Hank Campbell, Science 2.0, August 6, 2015
- Is Monsanto Satan? The Pleasure and Problem of Conspiracy Theory, Alan Levinovitz, Religion Dispatches, July 8, 2015
- FOIAs Chilling a Scientific Dialog – Your Call to Communicate, Kevin Folta, ASPB Plant Science Today, April 28, 2015
- The anti-GM lobby appears to be taking a page out of the Climategate playbook, Nina Federoff, Peter Raven and Phillip Sharp, The Guardian, March 9, 2015
- Why Do Many Reasonable People Doubt Science? Joel Achenbach, National Geographic, March 2015
- How to Balance Transparency with Academic Freedom? Keith Kloor, Discover Magazine, February 27, 2015
- Why scientists often hate record requests, Anna Clark, Columbia Journalism Review, February 25, 2015
- Anti-GMO Activist Seeks to Expose Scientists' Emails with Big Ag, Alan Levinovitz, Wired, February 23, 2015
- USRTK wants the Emails of Public Scientists, Karl Haro von Mogel, Biology Fortified, February 11, 2015
- Updated: Agricultural researchers rattled by demands for documents from group opposed to GM foods, Keith Kloor, AAAS Science Magazine, February 11, 2015

GMO Answers:

- GMO Answers Stands by Our Commitment to Answering Questions with Transparency, GMO Answers, August 14, 2015

Kevin Folta's Blog Posts:

- Bringing My Dead Mother to their Disgusting Cause, Kevin Folta, Illumination, August 22, 2015
- Retraction and Apology. Do the Right Thing, Kevin Folta, Illumination, August 18, 2015
- Transparency Weaponized Against Scientists, Kevin Folta, Science 2.0, August 16, 2015
- The Radical Activist Attack on a Teacher, Kevin Folta, Illumination, August 10, 2015
- Silencing Inconvenient Science – Favilov, Kevin Folta, Illumination, August 9, 2015
- A Crisis Building, Kevin Folta, Illumination, August 8, 2015
- Contributions, Funding and Outreach, Kevin Folta, Illumination, August 6, 2015
- Science as a "Marketing Arm" of Big Ag, Kevin Folta, Illumination, April 1, 2015
- Complaint Department, Kevin Folta, Illumination, March 18, 2015
- Sad from Their Rage, Kevin Folta, Illumination, March 4, 2015
- Manufacturing a Turning Point, Kevin Folta, Illumination, February 22, 2015
- Rethinking Through Our Temptations, Kevin Folta, Illumination, February 21, 2015
- True Intentions, Kevin Folta, Illumination, February 19, 2015
- Arctic Apple Deregulated – Predictions?, Kevin Folta, Illumination, February 15, 2015
- An Open Letter to US-RTK, Kevin Folta, Illumination, February 13, 2015
- Ketchum and Me, Kevin Folta, Illumination, February 12, 2015
- Silencing Public Scientists, Kevin Folta, Illumination, February 11, 2015
- University of Florida's Deep Monsanto Ties, Illumination, August 23, 2014

Proactive Stakeholder Engagement

1. **Industry Stakeholders**: Work with industry groups to align our approaches, as well as share proactive and reactive messaging. *ACTION ITEM: UPDATE STATUS AND REQUEST INDUSTRY TPS*

Stakeholder(s)	On Point
BIO FOIA Working Group	Kris Ramaraju
BIO • Karen Batra	Kelly Clauss
CBI (GMOA) • Kate Hall	Kelly Clauss
CFI • Roxi Beck	Kelly Clauss / Shawna Lemke
CLA • Jay Vroom • Mary Emma Young	Sam Murphey
CLI • Deb Carstoiu • Denise Dewar	Kelly Clauss
IFIC • Dave Schmidt	Shawna Lemke
Ketchum (GMOA) • Juliet Johnson • Lorraine Thelian	Kelly Clauss
USFRA	Danielle Stuart
Internal Stakeholders	
GA - Lisa Drake, Scott Kuschmider and Michael Dykes & Team	Kelly Clauss
RPSA - Tracey Reynolds & Team	Kelly Clauss
Stakeholder Engagement Team - Martha Schlicker & Team	Kelly Clauss
U.S. Corporate Engagement - Mike Parrish & IA Team	Kelly Clauss

2. **University Stakeholders:** *ACTION ITEM: Brainstorm what we can do / need to do to provide assistance to the universities. Develop a list of relationship owners. Pull together a history of our relationship with the university. Ask Connie to pull information about our giving to the university and any large or unusual gifts.*

   Kevin Folta / University of Florida

   Reddit AMA


FOLTA_AMA RECAP_FOR SC.pdf

GMO Answers specific:

- ☐ This is the one negative comment: cites "unprofessional guidelines" https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvw616
- ☐ We provided him a "classroom to teach" (side note: he frequently references GMOA this way socially) https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvwypj
- ☐ "Why I like GMOA" https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvvvmi
- ☐ Why FOIA? Because I wrote on GMOA. https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvvoid
- ☐ "My crime was answering questions on a site" https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvvdl6
- ☐ FOIA happened "purportedly" to get info on GMOA (AVE) https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctw1yew

Monsanto Specific:

- ☐ $25k explanation/answer https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvzcdv
- ☐ My ties to them are very few https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvwygv
- ☐ Can delete emails if he wants, Monsanto distance https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvzu0g
- ☐ Someone calls him on this https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctwbub9
- ☐ A little more open on who he knows at Monsanto https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctw3zty
- ☐ "I'm taking the heat for somehow being corrupt over a relatively tiny payment to an outreach program--and have been completely transparent. https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvwa4n
- ☐ What was the $25K it used for and do you have evidence of this? https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvunc7

General Science threads:

- ☐ There is no fox in the henhouse; we need GMO science to be more available to the public https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvwd15
- ☐ Great for the stand up for science series: https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvxz8z
- ☐ For stand up for science - how grants work. Grants can only be used for the purpose written. https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvwdsh
- ☐ AVE IQ2 funded travel and raises money https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctw0x6l
- ☐ FERPA concerns https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvynba
- ☐ One of the few negative comments - this AMA wreaks of damage control https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctweiaq

Activist threads:

- ☐ OCA looked down on https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvxg5v
- ☐ They are after undisclosed grants https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctw1e5r
- ☐ Thread about getting the emails out first https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctw5dcy
- ☐ Mentions the "Prick" comment/email https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctw2rqf
- ☐ References BeachVetOC (twitter troll) https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvvbus
- ☐ OCA is the problem - they are funding Ruskin and squashing independent research https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctvunc7
- ☐ Former Monsanto Employee talking smack about the company https://www.reddit.com/r/science/comments/3g8l2h/an_antibiotechnology_activist_group_has_targeted/ctw7mgn

For updates: I am working on content related to why / when we use restricted grants compared to other types of grants. Charla is watching for media coverage and looking for places to engage as needed.

Proactive and Reactive Media Approach

1. **Prior to Document Release:** In advance of any document release by USRTK, we will take a strategic but reactive media approach. If we receive inquiries from any reporters, we will provide the link to our digital hub and the media statement immediately.

   Holding Statement
   Our company is helping develop new tools and sustainable solutions to help farmers produce more robust harvests, while reducing the impact on the environment. Among many other partners, we're proud to collaborate with world-class researchers at major universities on these important efforts.

   While we respect open-records laws as a vital safeguard in a democratic society, we fear that this particular request is an attempt to silence leading scholars in the field of agricultural biotechnology. These independent researchers are some of the best and brightest minds in agriculture and plant science. We fully stand by our professional relationships and collaborations, and we see these records requests as little more than academic bullying.

   You can review additional information about these open-records requests at http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/response-to-right-to-know.aspx. In addition, we invite everyone to learn more about the work we're doing at Monsanto by visiting discover.monsanto.com.

2. **Proactive Component:** When the release of documents to USRTK is imminent, we will evaluate the situation and determine if we should provide a statement and link to the hub to a select set of reporters. *ACTION ITEM: Pull together a list of reporters who cover FOIA and we could potentially pitch. Pull together a LTE strategy.*

3. **Reactive Component:** Once we are aware that documents have been released, we will develop custom media statements as needed and appropriate to respond to specific documents and USRTK's attacks. We will share these statements with appropriate media contacts and post them to the hub for additional circulation on social media. *ACTION ITEM: Pull together the spreadsheet of potential allegations and prepare the tps. Do we need an additional media statement?*

   Media Statement: Dr. Folta's Unrestricted Grant
   Monsanto is a strong advocate for science and science education, and we are supportive of programs that increase awareness and understanding of science and technology.

   We were happy to support Dr. Folta's outreach program to increase understanding of biotechnology, as well as improve each participant's ability to effectively engage public audiences and share science-based information.

   We funded Dr. Folta's proposal through an unrestricted grant to the University of Florida with no strings attached. However, unrestricted grants are still subject to university policies, procedures and controls. They are beneficial to a researcher's ongoing program because it ensures their independence; we cannot make any formal requirements on the research and we cannot make any claims to any intellectual property rights that may result.

We see public-private collaborations as essential to the advancement of science, innovation and agriculture. We fully stand by our professional relationships and collaborations, and have shared information about how we collaborate with academics and universities on our web site.

Media Statement: Dr. Folta Reallocates Grant to Food Bank

We funded Dr. Folta's proposal through an unrestricted grant to the University of Florida with no strings attached – which means we cannot make any formal requirements on how the funds are used. While the overall situation is unfortunate, we are supportive of Dr. Folta's and the University's decision. We often support nonprofit organizations that help with critical community needs such as food security, and we are glad these funds will go to a good cause.

Media Statement: Dr. Folta and Importance of Public-Private Collaboration (NYT-specific)

We were happy to support Dr. Folta's outreach program to increase understanding of biotechnology, because we always have been a strong advocate for science and science education, and we are supportive of programs that increase awareness and understanding of science and technology. We funded Dr. Folta's proposal through an unrestricted grant to the University of Florida. An unrestricted grant to a university is much like a gift: it can have no strings attached. A grant of this nature is important to the academics to ensure their independence and limit any formal requirements that might otherwise attach to their outreach efforts. However, it is important to note that unrestricted grants remain subject to all university policies and procedures and are administered by the university.

Within agriculture, the relationships between the public and private sector are critical and have existed for decades. We see public-private collaborations as essential to the advancement of science, innovation and agriculture. For many scientists in the public sector, their passion is to teach science, to explain what is known or unknown, to talk about the risks and benefits, and to unmask half-truths and critical conclusions that are built on limited data or controversial methods. It is part of their role to have knowledge within their discipline and to communicate that knowledge to the public; in fact, it is one element in the consideration of professors for tenure. They serve a very important and well-defined role in serving the greater public good.

The program that Dr. Folta developed is an example of a great program for public-private collaboration. He was already doing it – just on a smaller scale. The challenge he faced is that it would cost money to expand, and that is how the private sector could help.

We fully stand by our professional relationships and collaborations, and have shared information about how we collaborate with academics and universities on our web site.

Regarding your thoughts about misinformation, you are correct. There is a lot of misinformation generated by groups who oppose agriculture and biotechnology. The misinformation is not only limited to the science – there is a lot of misinformation about Monsanto as well. Misinformation is affecting the entire sector, and it is in the public interest for academics to weigh in credibly and point out where the information is incorrect – not only to consumers but to stakeholders like lawmakers and regulators as well. For example, we may work with academic experts who share our science-based views to advocate for supportive policies, regulation and laws that are based on the principles of sound science.

As a follow up to our call: For decades we've interacted with academics to not only advance science but also to correct misinformation the public has about plant biotechnology. The outreach to academics following the spring of 2013 does not represent a new strategy. If anything, the industry's development

of programs like GMOAnswers in 2013 and Monsanto's launch of our discover.Monsanto.com website in 2014, represents our willingness to engage with consumers about their increased interest in agriculture and food. Some of the consumer interest may have been driven by labeling campaigns and the resulting misinformation generated during that time. But, the real shift here is our desire and willingness to be more transparent and accessible to consumers.

We have been polling consumer attitudes for decades. University scientists consistently poll as one of the most trusted resources. Here's a link if you are interested: "Consumer Attitudes about Agricultural Biotechnology" from Winter 2001. http://ncsu.edu/ffci/publications/2001/v6-n1-2001-winter/consumer-attitudes.php

Qs&As *ACTION ITEM: Brainstorm more; especially funding options like unrestricted grants.*

1. **What information will be released?**
   The universities in question will review the requests from USRTK and will make decisions about what documents, if any, they will release in accordance with state laws, including laws that protect the release of businesses' confidential information. We expect the universities to fully respect all protections afforded to our confidential business information by applicable laws, contracts and other provisions.

2. **Who received the open-records requests?**
   We are aware of requests to academics at four universities: the University of California-Davis; the University of Florida; the University of Illinois; and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

3. **Why were they targeted?**
   We'd refer you to the press release from USRTK. http://usrtk.org/gmo/u-s-right-to-know-foias-profs-who-wrote-for-gmo-pr-website/

4. **What is U.S. Right to Know?**
   A California-based special-interest group. The group's only disclosed funder is the Organic Consumers Association.

5. **How does Monsanto engage in the public policy process?**
   Monsanto, like many other companies and stakeholders, advocates our position before governments. Specifically, we advocate for supportive policies, regulation and laws that are based on the principles of sound science. In addition, we thoroughly follow local laws and conduct routine audits to ensure our efforts are transparent, appropriate and legal. You can read more about our policies concerning government affairs and other activities on our web site.

6. **What is Monsanto's role in GMO Answers?**
   As part of the Council for Biotechnology Information, Monsanto is one of the founding members and funders of GMO Answers. GMO Answers is fully transparent about this relationship on its website.

7. **Does Monsanto review answers written by third parties for GMO Answers?**
   We do have an opportunity to read all answers before they are posted to the site – but predominately for our own awareness of the content that is being shared. If we catch any grammatical or significant factual errors, we can notify the Community Manager with our feedback. However, third-party expert responses cannot be changed or edited without the consent of the

expert, and our feedback is rare and can always be disregarded. See GMO Answers Stands by Our Commitment to Answering Questions with Transparency.

8. **What is Monsanto's policy on making contributions or payments to academic researchers?**
   All Monsanto employee activities are strictly governed by our Code of Business Conduct and other corporate policies. *ACTION ITEM: Strengthen this response.*

9. **Does Monsanto pay university researchers to speak on the company's behalf?**
   All Monsanto employee activities are strictly governed by our Code of Business Conduct and other corporate policies. *ACTION ITEM: Strengthen this response.*

10. **REACTIVE ONLY: In this email, a Monsanto employee made unprofessional and crass comments about [xxxxx] . How does the company respond to that?**
    As Monsanto employees, we all have the responsibility to act with professionalism, integrity and respect. Those particular comments fall short of that standard. We'll take a look at this situation and address it internally as needed.

11. **How much has Monsanto or trade associations that you are associated with donated in the last three years to BioFortified and to the Genetic Literacy Project?**
    You can check with Kate Hall, but we are not aware that CBI has provided any funding to BioFortified or Genetic Literacy Project. We also do not fund BioFortified or Genetic Literacy Project.

12. **Should we have been more transparent about payment for travel for the academics / financing these scholars?**
    We follow the guidance for gifts, grants, research agreements, etc. that is provided by the universities that we fund. While each university handles it differently based on the situation, they typically report funding through their internal reporting mechanisms and often the listings are available on their public websites. Other times, we may work with a university to issue a press release. And, of course, this information also can be requested through the more formal Freedom of Information Act process.

13. **The University of Florida lists Monsanto as a "gold donor" to the U of Florida foundation (2013-14). Does that lead to an expectation that their academics will be supportive of GMOs and our products?**
    I have not been able to secure information to address your mention of Monsanto as a "gold donor." Regarding the second part of your question though, of course not; gifts and grants are not given with any expectations regarding support of particular products or conclusions.

Employee Communications Plan

1. Fully brief and prepare the employee communications team to engage when needed.

2. Identify and work with individual employees who are most likely to be professionally and personally impacted. Develop communication strategies and messaging plans.

3. Based on actual documents released and related media coverage / social media conversation, we will coordinate with the employee communications team to post a story on Connection.

4. Once we expect a significant document release, distribute an Issue Alert.

5. Work with Human Resources and Legal to develop a CBT to educate employees on document creation, email forwarding and record retention.

March Email to Employees (Krishna Ramaraju)

You are receiving this email because you have been identified through an electronic search of email traffic, based on sender and recipient names, as a Monsanto employee who may have exchanged emails from your Monsanto account with one or more of the individuals listed below. All of these individuals are/were professors, graduate students, or otherwise affiliated with a public academic institution. Some of these institutions have received a freedom of information request (per state law) from U.S. Right to Know, a non-governmental public interest group with the stated intent of using the information to prepare articles for dissemination to the public. This group is seeking the release of copies of communications between these academics and the representatives of multiple entities, including Monsanto. Other institutions may have received or may later receive similar requests. We are in the process of contacting these institutions to request that they protect any personal or confidential business information to the extent allowed by law as they respond to these requests.

We are seeking your assistance and asking you to provide us with any information that would help us characterize your interactions since January 1, 2012, with any of the individuals listed below, using your Monsanto account or address. At this time, you do not need to provide copies of any potentially relevant documents. If you have documents (emails or hard copy) that you believe could be of concern if publicly disclosed, please let me know in your response per the instructions at the end of this message and I will contact you to follow up. Please note that communications that were primarily personal in nature may still be disclosed by the institution.

To be clear, my request for information regarding your communications covers emails, hard-copy documents and any other communications you may have had that were or possibly were written down at any point and may be in the possession of one of the individuals listed below. While we are requesting any information you may have to describe your interactions with these academics, we ask that you please especially note any of the following:

1. Any types of agreements/deals/funding or funding requests
2. Sensitive business deals, proprietary research, or any other type of confidential business information/trade secrets
3. Outreach efforts, Monsanto reputation work or any other type of public relations efforts
4. Government affairs/lobbying work or communications about regulators or regulations
5. Any other information of special concern

Please also indicate whether you sent any of these academics any emails containing information related to your work at Monsanto from a personal email account.

This is a very time sensitive matter so we are requesting that you respond as soon as possible, and no later than noon Monday, March 16, 2015. We ask that you respond regardless of the nature/scope any communications you may have had with any of the individuals listed below. In the event you may need more time to respond, we ask that you provide an initial response by the due date, and indicate that you may need to supplement.

Please do not contact any of the named professors or universities regarding this FOIA request or our related internal processes in this matter. If you are contacted on this topic, please refer the individual to me. The appropriate ongoing exchange of information with academic institutions in the normal course of your work may continue.

Please respond by replying to this message or sending an email with the subject line titled "Academic FOIA" and marked "Attorney Client Privileged Communication" to me, Kris Ramaraju, at this email address. If you have any questions on this matter or prefer to discuss orally please let me know. Thank you for your time and attention.

Background Information

U.S. Right to Know Backgrounder

U.S. Right to Know is registered as a 501(c)(3) organization registered in the State of California. The organization claims to be "working to expose what the food industry doesn't want us to know." Gary Ruskin, who was the campaign manager for the pro-Prop 37 campaign in California, is the organization's executive director and co-founder. The organization first emerged online in mid-January 2015. Ruskin began posting items to the organization's website on Jan. 12, 2015. Since then, he's posted a number of items relating to GMO labeling, transparency and other issues. Politico reported a brief item on the group's launch on Jan. 20.

Because the organization is so new, they have not yet filed a complete Form 990. They have registered with the California Secretary of State. On the U.S. Right to Know website, Ruskin claims the organization will disclose any "major contributor," defined as a contributor who donates $5,000 or more. As of March 10, the only contribution listed was in the amount of $64,500 from the Organic Consumers Association.

In addition to his work with the Prop 37 campaign, Ruskin previously served as the executive director of a group called Commercial Alert, and he was director of the Center for Corporate Policy, which publishes reports attacking business and industrial interests. He has an undergraduate degree in religion from Carleton College and a master's degree in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

Ruskin has a modest and mainstream social media profile. He has 803 followers on Twitter and has posted somewhat frequently since January on topics relating to glyphosate toxicity and GMO labeling as well as the ongoing FOIA matter. Also since launching U.S. Right to Know, he has been quoted in articles by Reuters, Wired News, Science Magazine, Politico and other outlets.

In the online publication "Spooky Business: Corporate Espionage Against Nonprofit Organizations" (dated Nov. 20, 2013), Ruskin claimed there is a formal relationship between Monsanto, Blackwater and Total Intelligence Solutions. In the publication, he claims, "Many of the world's largest corporations and their trade associations – including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Walmart, Monsanto, Bank of America, Down Chemical, Kraft, Coca-Cola, Chevron, Burger King, McDonald's, Shell, BP, BAE, Sasol, Brown & Williamson and E.ON – have been liked to espionage or planned espionage against nonprofit organizations, activists and whistleblowers" (p. 3). Ruskin later claims, "According to internal Total Intelligence communications, biotech giant Monsanto – the world's largest supplier of genetically modified seeds – hired the firm in 2008-09. The relationship between the two companies appears to have been solidified in January 2008 when total Intelligence chair Cofer Black traveled to Zurich to meet with Kevin Wilson, Monsanto's security manager for global issues" (p. 34).

In addition to Ruskin, the only publicly listed employee of U.S. Right to Know is Stacy Malkan, who is listed as co-founder and media director. She has published a book, "Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty

Industry" (2007), and was co-founder of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. She worked with Ruskin as media director of the Prop 37 campaign and previously was a journalist.

The organization has a small board of directors: Juliet Schor, board chair, Professor of Sociology at Boston College; Charlie Gray, researcher, Greenpeace USA, and former director, Center for Corporate Policy; and Lisa Graves, executive director, Center for Media and Democracy, and former U.S. Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Policy, and former legislative strategist at the ACLU.

Outline of USRTK FOIA Request

All correspondence (letters, email) to or from Professor (redacted) **from any staff of the following corporations or organizations**: Monsanto, Ketchum, GMO Answers, Biotechnology Industry Organization, Council for Biotechnology Information, Grocery Manufacturers Association, Fleishman Hillard, Ogilvy & Mather, Genetic Literacy Project (including jon@jonentine.com), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and

Any correspondence containing the following keywords/search terms: American Society for Nutrition, Abbott Nutrition, Cargill, Coca-Cola, Coke, Dannon, DuPont, General Mills, Herbaqlife, Hillshire, Kellogg, Kraft, Mars, McCormick, McDonald's, Mondelez, Monsanto, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Dairy Council, Nestle, PepsiCo, Pepsi, Pfizer, Sugar Association, Tate & Lyle, Unilever

BIO Communications Plan

Media Protocol: While it's not appropriate for BIO to comment on specific member company correspondence, BIO can certainly respond to general media inquiries on this issue. Refer any appropriate media inquiries to Karen Batra [redacted]@bio.org or 202-[redacted]).

Stand-by Media Statement:
As the world's largest biotechnology trade association, we represent and frequently interact with biotechnology companies, state biotechnology centers and academic institutions. An important part of our work requires that we stay updated on the latest scientific studies, research and development taking place in the academic arena.

Efforts to inform the public about biotechnology and GMOs are critical: to help consumers determine what's real from what is merely speculation and fear; to recognize that not all scientific research is created equal; and to consider what information is reliable and valid.

The scientific community has an important role to play, and many scientists recognize that providing the most accurate information is vital to increasing public confidence in science and, therefore, their work.

It's our mission to stand with science and help educate the public on the solutions that science has already delivered and the promises yet to come.

For More Information:

- *Audio: Will FOIA request have 'chilling effect' on GMO science communication?*, March 17, 2015 - Genetic Literacy Project, by Steven Novella
- *When did science become a dirty word?*, March 16, 2015 – CNBC, by Cathleen Enright
- *What is the GMO industry trying to hide?*, February 27, 2015 – GMO Answers, by Cathleen Enright
- *Anti-GMO Activist Seeks to Expose Scientists' Emails With Big Ag*, February 23, 2015 - *Wired* magazine, by Alan Levinovitz

- *Stop the next Climategate*, the Cornell Alliance for Science on-line petition in support of scientists under attack
- *Why Did Anti-GMO Group Target Certain University Academics?*, February 13, 2015 - *Discover* Magazine Collide-a-Scape blog, by Keith Kloor
- *Silencing Public Scientists*, February 11, 2015 - Illumination blog, by Kevin Folta
- *Can Biotech Opponents Quash Scientific Facts?*, February 11, 2015, BIOtechNow blog, by Karen Batra (includes links to other resources)

GMO Answers Communications Plan

Any situation related to this issue has the potential to be extremely damaging, regardless of how benign the information may seem. If the information receives traction on social media, earned media or both, it heightens the impact and has the potential to diminish the credibility of GMO Answers. Regardless of the accuracy of the claim – the reach/escalation it receives is a key indicator of the potential impact.

The filters outlined below will help us to determine the scale of the activities and the potential reputational damage. It will also help us determine whether we need to escalate the issue to the Steering Committee and expert community for a fuller scale response. For example, if all of the indicators below are "high," we will schedule emergency calls with the Steering Committee to discuss a coordinated response. If all indicators are "low," we will engage with our normal social and media response and continue to track the activity.

EVALUATION FILTERS AND ALERT MATRIX			
RATE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS	**LOW**	**MEDIUM**	**HIGH**
Volume of online dialogue directed at GMO Answers related to topic?	☐	☐	☐
Real or perceived level of the original poster's credibility or expertise?	☐	☐	☐
Level of the poster's influence or following?	☐	☐	☐
Likelihood that others will relate to the post, or take related action (e.g. boycott, "call to action", Thunderclap campaign, sign petition, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
Likelihood the post, dialogue or situation will go viral? *Note: Negative videos, photos or interactive elements are higher risk*	☐	☐	☐
Likelihood it will attract traditional media attention?	☐	☐	☐

PROACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Following the initial announcement that universities received FOIA requests, GMO Answers began a "Stand Up for Science" series to support the academic community being targeted, along with our broader expert community. As part of this series, GMO Answers is exploring either posting existing third-party content on the website and/or recruiting third party experts to develop content to explain how the academic funding process works and the collaborative relationship between academia and the private sector, as well as content on other issues that may come up as we read through the emails. We can link to this content when appropriate scenarios arise as noted below. Following is the outline of the series:

Published

- No Scientist Should Face Harassment. Period., Gretchen Goldman (Originally posted at the Union of Concerned Scientists blog)
- Myth: Biotech Companies Block Independent Research, Amanda Zaluckyj (Originally posted at The Farmer's Daughter USA)

- About those industry funded GMO studies …, Community Manger (Excerpt from Marc Brazeau's post on Biofortified)
- What is the GMO industry trying to hide?, Cathleen Enright

In Development

- **Community Manager Post:** Stand up for Science
  - Gateway: This post will serve as the entry point to all of the content in the Stand up for Science series. It is intended to make it easy to navigate and find all of the content included in the series. The team will add additional content / links to this post if more content is posted in the future. It will remain "featured" on the studies and articles page to increase visibility.


Post 1_ Stand up for Science_Draft Commu

  - Holding Content: This article will not be posted to the site immediately. Should there be additional media coverage regarding the expert email requests, the team is prepared to update / tailor this draft based on the news cycle and quickly post to the site.


Post 2_Stand Up for Science- FOIA Primer_

- **Academic Fundraising - What It Is and Why It Exists / Q&A Article**
  - Independent Expert Author: Dr. Shaw, Mississippi State University. Post which explains (1) How public universities seek research funding (2) Different types of giving (endowments, direct research funding, etc.); and (3) The framework and rules universities have in place to protect the integrity of the research (show research results are not cherry-picked).


Post 3_GMO Answers - Shaw Academic Fun

- **Public / Private Collaborations – In Agriculture and Beyond.**
  - Post to explore why companies invest in research and collaborate with the university system beyond funding (partnership programs, collaborative research, etc.) - Why this is important for today's leading institutions and businesses.
  - Reaching out to DuPont/Bayer for content to discuss how this works in other fields (e.g., healthcare, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy) - practice across multiple industries – not just Agriculture
  - Reference/quote info from Monsanto here
  - Independent Expert: TBD; Steve Savage? – Discuss how collaboration/partnerships worked with private co's when he was an academic researcher

Additional proactive opportunities (e.g. media outreach, op-ed placement, paid ad in print outlet, etc.) will be considered as emails are released and information becomes available (if appropriate). For example, if USRTK releases emails and there is no "smoking gun," we will consider proactive posturing to drive the "Stand Up for Science" narrative, explaining that while our goal is to be more open and transparent, our experts are under attack.

SCENARIOS AND RESPONSE APPROACHES

The following are hypothetical scenarios and a recommended response approach for each. The protocol below is intended to serve as a guideline for how GMO Answers may respond and will be tailored on a case by case basis. Each scenario will be evaluated based on the filters outlined above.

GENERAL APPROACH	
Scenario	**Response Approach**
USRTK extracts email excerpts and claims GMO Answers is influencing experts and/or their answers posted to GMOA.	• Share statement addressing how we work with experts, philosophy, how the Q&A process works, re-state commitment to transparency/open dialogue; post to GMOA.com (depending on scale of situation). • Consider releasing additional statement(s) which review each email in question and refute claims made (if available) – provide additional context to email communication in question. Release full email(s) if appropriate. • Host call with experts named in emails to reinforce GMOA's appreciation for their contributions to the site and discuss response approach.
USTRK accuses GMO Answers of paying the experts (through direct funds, consulting fees, travel fees, gifts, etc.) as a way to influence their work on GMOAnswers.com.	• Release statement which explains that GMOA does not fund experts directly, provide additional context to the history/nature of GMOA relationship with experts and philosophy of GMOA; post to GMOA.com (depending on scale of situation). • Host call with experts named in emails to reinforce GMOA's appreciation for their contributions to the site and discuss response approach.
GMO Answers or member companies are accused of influencing academic institutions and individuals through funding/grants.	• If GMO Answers is referenced or called into question, release statement to reestablish position on funding; explain the Q&A process and that experts/academic institutions are not funded directly; post to GMOA.com (depending on scale of situation). Link to content on the website about how academic funding works. • Coordinate with public universities to potentially release statement regarding funding; explain internal safeguards/protocol followed to ensure research is not influenced by funding. • Member companies to address individual complaints on their own, ideally providing additional context to funding/grant and respond to media inquiries related to topic.
Academic/industry leaders support USRTK in the discrediting of GMO Answers' experts (e.g. sign petition, issue letter, etc.).	• *Overriding philosophy for the response: Do not attack the messenger, refute the claim or message.* • Host call with experts under attack to reinforce GMOA's appreciation for their contributions to the site. • Post statement to GMOA.com, which reinforces why experts are credible, why we work with them, and that we do not support personal attacks; provide statement to media if contacted (issue more proactively if warranted); where appropriate link to statement defending experts -- already posted here. • Provide link to Union of Concerned Scientists' 2015 study about FOIA requests being used to harass researchers.

GENERAL APPROACH	
Scenario	**Response Approach**
	• Work with experts' university to determine if more proactive media outreach is needed (if appropriate).
USTRK releases email excerpts from experts who were "unhappy" during GMOA program launch.	• Release general statement, which explains that GMOA's philosophy was first of a kind for the industry, addresses that this movement was a big change, and argues that opening the doors/volunteering to answer consumer questions is a significant undertaking. • Work with any experts referenced in emails to address specific concerns and explain support for effort today (if willing).
Excerpts from emails released, which show a condescending tone toward consumers who submitted questions.	• Apologize for lack of tact and state unequivocally that it was never GMOA or our expert's intent to offend anyone. Restate GMOA open dialogue and respectful philosophy and promise to handle all questions and those who ask them with the respect they deserve going forward.
Egregious email illustrates what would be the smoking gun of the industry (e.g. email shows expert/company covering up unflattering research or showing GMOs are dangerous/harmful).	*Worst case scenario* • Schedule urgent call with Steering Committee to discuss response and emails in question. • Develop tailored GMO Answers statement which addresses email content; clarify no involvement/knowledge of the situation (if true) and issue an apology; post to GMOA.com. • Additional activities/response to be determined with Steering Committee based on email content. • Work with expert/company in question to issue apology; coordinate response with experts' academic institution (if appropriate). • If the edited content is posted to GMOA, remove ASAP; work to post accurate/original information as soon as possible.
USRTK releases email where member company requests expert to change/edit an answer, which states that GMOs, pesticides, etc. are dangerous.	• Company in question to issue apology, explain email correspondence on their own. • Work with expert to explain situation, context to answer. • If the edited answer is posted to GMOA, remove ASAP. • Issue statement to clarify no involvement/knowledge of the situation (if true), re-state commitment to open dialogue. • Clarify any readability edits are made by contributing expert and all suggestions are just that, suggestions, rather than edits from GMOA or GMOA leadership; share expert contributor guidelines.
Excerpt from email shows that member company recommended experts to join (illustrating company influencing expert pool and potentially opinions).	• Member companies to address individual issues on their own, ideally providing additional context and clarification behind the expert recommendations and explaining that recommendations don't equal influence. • If appropriate, GMOA to explain the process behind expert recruitment (including identifying, onboarding, and engaging experts). Explain GMOA's commitment to identifying the most suitable expert to answer each question. • Consider linking to post on GMOA.com on the collaborative

GENERAL APPROACH	
Scenario	**Response Approach**
	relationship between academia and the private sector.

SOCIAL MEDIA APPROACH	
Scenario	**Response Approach**
1st tweet from Gary Ruskin	Alert account team to tweet and post it (most likely) will lead to: post response on GMOAnswers.com using tailored statement. Do not promote, but have ready to use.
10 tweets/hour (from different sources)	Core social team to monitor conversation, reply only if necessary. Do not use prepared response yet.
One of the following (25/50/100) will happen – not all	
If 25 tweets/hour (from different sources)	Core social team monitors, responds to all tweets possible (those asking questions/not trolling), using response on GMOAnswers.com only if needed.
If 50 tweets/hour (from different sources)	Core social team alerts core account team, responds to all tweets possible (those asking questions/not trolling), using response on GMOAnswers.com.
If 100 tweets/hour	Account team and clients alerted, social team responds to all possible tweets and assesses long-term momentum/longevity. (Is this a Thunderclap campaign? Pull metrics around how many single tweets vs. conversations are occurring. Assess the probability of this dying down in one day.)
More than one day of social volume: 50+ tweets	Social team issues proactive tweet and Facebook post using response on GMOAnswers.com and begins paid Google promotion around potential search terms.
Facebook attack	"Trolling" Facebook comments deleted (see GMOA terms of use for Facebook). Dissenting comments that can be responded to are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

FOUNDATIONAL MESSAGES

Foundational messages will be used to develop tailored GMO Answers' statements for scenarios outlined above, as appropriate.

GMOA Funding: GMO Answers represent a group of independent scientists, researchers, academics, farmers, industry organizations and experts from member companies committed to beginning a new conversation about how our food is grown. GMO Answers is funded by the Council for Biotechnology Information, whose members include BASF Plant Sciences, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, Monsanto Company and Syngenta. GMO Answers is deeply committed to transparency, and has always been entirely open about who funds our operational costs. You can read about the member companies who founded GMO Answers here.

Expert Funding: The independent experts who answer consumer questions are not paid by GMO Answers. Experts donate their time to answer questions in their area of expertise for the site. They do so because they are passionate about helping the public better understand GMOs and how our food is grown.

About FOIA: Transparency is at the heart of the GMO Answers initiative. We believe these email correspondences – in their entirety – show all parties' commitments to truth and making information available.

When the email communication is taken out of context, the information may convey an inaccurate depiction of the situation.

While FOIA is an important tool for information gathering, it is sometimes used inappropriately as a fishing expedition to slow down research, intimidate faculty and penalize universities whose scientists make the time to talk about their work and what the research says – a veiled attempt to look for a "smoking gun" for some hypothetical wrongdoing. What's concerning is that this FOIA effort may ultimately have the chilling effect of quieting some of the voices of the world's most talented experts on biotechnology in the agriculture space by discouraging them from contributing to the national conversation. [Insert context/additional explanation.]

How GMOA Q&A Works: GMO Answers accepts and does our best to answer any and every question that is submitted. Our team reviews these inquiries and solicits feedback from experts across a wide range of disciplines in order to provide consumers with balanced, fact-based responses to their questions. To date, we have answered over 800 questions about GMOs, from basics like, "what is a GMO?" to questions about DNA, the safety of GMO consumption, and the science of genetic engineering. Additional information about the Q&A process and website moderation is available here [insert link]

GMOA Philosophy: GMO Answers was created to do a better job answering your questions — no matter what they are — about GMOs. The biotech industry stands 100 percent behind the health and safety of the GM crops on the market today, but we acknowledge that, in the past, we haven't done the best job communicating about them – what they are, how they are made, what the safety data says. GMOAnswers.com was founded to answer these questions and start an open conversation about how our food is grown.

Commitment to Transparency: Transparency is at the heart of the GMO Answers initiative. The About GMO Answers page on our website clearly states who funds GMO Answers, and the organizations, companies and others who share a commitment to our core principles and support our effort to answer any question about GMOs. Additionally, GMO Answers provides extensive profiles for every expert who answers questions on our site. We have over 200 dedicated experts who contribute to our effort, and we stand firmly behind the health and safety of the GM crops on the market today. We don't edit questions. We invite disclosure and discourse.

Embracing Skepticism: GMO Answers exists for people who are skeptical of GMOs. Nothing is off limits – because the GMO industry has nothing to hide and believes in the science, testing and safety of its products. GMO Answers has been clear about its goal: a commitment to an open and transparent dialogue. This entire effort is about sharing information – not hiding it. We stand 100 percent behind the health and safety of the GM crops on the market today. We hope GMO Answers will start a new conversation and help consumers with their food choices. We want to present the data and answer the tough questions so that consumers can come to their own conclusions, with all the facts and information in hand.

Credible Experts: GMO Answers has qualified, credible experts who answer consumer questions about GMOs and how our food is grown. The experts we work with include conventional, GM and organic farmers, agribusiness experts, scientists, academics, doctors and nutritionists from a wide range of expertise. These experts are the leaders in their fields, respected for their subject matter expertise and their unique insights. We also understand that many consumers have questions about specific companies who work with GMOs, so we invite company experts to respond to questions about their practices when appropriate.
GMO Answers was created to answer constructive questions and be a safe place for people concerned about how our food is grown. There is no place in this debate for personal attacks like we have seen from <INSERT ACCUSER>. We stand firmly behind our team, and condemn these baseless attacks in the strongest possible terms.

First of Its Kind: For many years, the companies that produce biotech seeds focused primarily on their farmer customers, often not engaging or communicating with the broader public. This was a mistake on our part. We ceded our story to others, and as a result, some people became suspicious and fearful of foods that come from GM seeds and didn't know or understand why crops made from these seeds were entering the food system.

That is why we created GMOAnswers.com. We encourage the public to ask tough questions and be skeptical. Our site was the first of its kind, and given the unchartered territory, some were uneasy about this new approach at launch. However, over the past two years, we have engaged more than 200 experts and answered over 800 questions about GMOs. Initial fear and uneasiness have transformed into understanding and support for this initiative.

GMO Answers stands 100 percent behind the health and safety of the GM crops on the market today, but we acknowledge that the biotech industry hasn't always done the best job communicating about these products – what they are, how they are made, what the safety data says – up until now. We understand that across our society, media and the Internet, a growing number of people have shared a wide range of questions and emotions on the topic – ranging from excitement and optimism to skepticism and fear.

Apology for Insensitive Language: This is a personal and emotional issue for many people. For scientists and those who've dedicated their lives to this research, they may share frustration in what they perceived to be private email exchanges.

Respect is the first core principle of GMO Answers. Respect for people's right to choose healthy food products that are best for themselves and their families, and respect for people who want to learn more about how their food is grown. In this instance we failed to live up to our promise to the public, and for that we sincerely apologize. We will do better. We are committed to helping people on their journey to better understand how their food is grown, and we will continue that mission with a much deeper level of respect to those who pose their questions at GMOAnswers.com. We are addressing the matter to ensure that we continue to uphold this important principle and serve as a welcoming place for all consumers – no matter their perspective.

The Q&A Submission and Editing Process: Many of the questions submitted to GMOAnswers.com are answered by unpaid, third-party experts. In these cases, a question received on our site is routed to one or more independent experts who volunteer to provide answers within their field of expertise.

Once the third-party expert provides an answer, it is reviewed by the GMO Answers Community Manager, the Council for Biotechnology Information and its member companies that fund GMO Answers – BASF Plant Sciences, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, DuPont, Monsanto Company and Syngenta – for accuracy.

GMO Answers encourages experts to write responses using language and terms the average person can understand. If the response provided is too technical or if there is a question about a complex scientific fact or research source, GMO Answers will work with the expert to revise the response so it is easier for the average reader to understand. Once the expert provides the final answer to GMO Answers, it is proofed for punctuation and grammar, but the content is not changed or edited by GMO Answers. See GMO Answers Expert Contributor Guideline here [add link to source].

APPENDIX

The following guidelines are included in the GMO Answers style guide and can be made available/posted to the site to proactively communicate the parameters for editing expert content.

Guidelines: Expert Contributors
The following guidelines are intended to provide structure and context to the types of responses appropriate for the GMO Answers community.

Tone/Verbiage

- ***Write for the layman*** – GMO Answers is written for an eighth grade reading level similar to most consumer-facing informational sources, however Hill Research tells us the information and answers on the website are at the eleventh grade level.
    - When crafting a response, please refrain from including overly technical verbiage or "textbook" answers. If the response content is very technical (and sometimes the question calls for a technical answer), we recommend providing definitions to technical terms and/or links to additional information to help the reader understand your response.
    - If Ketchum team members cannot understand the answer, we may ask you to revise the answer provided and/or develop a simple summary to post along with you answer
- ***Personal*** – Please feel free to customize your answer by adding anecdotal or personal information. For example, if you have a connection to agriculture or food production, please share your story. If you have any other passions or personal experiences that will add to your response, please include.
- ***Friendly*** – Many of the GMO Answers users feel very strongly about their beliefs about GMOs. Please take extra care to ensure that responses that are respectful and considerate of all viewpoints, and avoid verbiage that may be interpreted as sarcastic or boastful, etc.

Length

- ***Appropriate to Question*** – The length of the response is at your discretion, some questions will require a lengthier response than others, depending upon the complexity of the question.
    - If the question requires a longer response (e.g. 600+ words), we request you submit a brief 2-3 sentence summary to be posted at the top of your response, or the GMO Answers team may draft a short summary at the beginning of the response which includes key points / quotations from your provided answer.

Video Responses Option

- GMO Answers encourages "video responses." Video responses can be recorded over a Skype call with Ketchum, or a cell phone or video camera recording or potentially through an arranged video interview when video freelancers are available. If using cellphones or tablets to record a response, please ensure the equipment is held sideways, for a landscape-oriented video.
    - We recommend developing a written outline of your answer – before taping a video response – to ensure the answer is clear and easy to follow.

Q&A Requirements:
Items to submit (in addition to your final answer):

- Title
- Short Bio (4-5 sentences)
- Headshot (size: 2MB + at least 70x70 pixels)
- Links to social profiles

Buzzwords to Avoid:

- "Great question"
- "Thanks for posting your question"

- "The short answer is no"
- "In summary"

Once your answer and corresponding materials are submitted:

- Ketchum will proof your content. Minor grammatical changes may be made to the document before posting to GMO Answers.
- If the GMO Answers team does find what it believes is an inaccuracy, the team may reach out to you for clarification. The same is true if the answer is too difficult for the average person to understand.
- Once the answer is posted to GMO Answers, Ketchum will provide the link to your posted answer and monitor the comments posted by the community below your answer. Should any comments require your attention, Ketchum will reach out to you.
- Thank you for your ongoing support for GMO Answers.