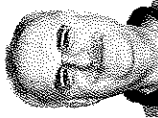


Ho hum, the Seralini show makes an encore



BY ALEX BINKLEY

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Like a tired old vaudeville act struggling to regain the headlines, the Seralini show is back with a new home for its widely discredited claims about the safety of genetically modified food.

Predictably the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network has jumped on the bandwagon

with a call on Health Canada to ban GM foods, re-evaluate the safety of those already approved, and for a good measure, conduct a complete overhaul of the regulatory system. Presumably, the only result that CBAN would accept is a system that approves no new GM crops and takes all the existing ones out of the grocery stores regardless of the science.

After the publication of Seralini's study on the health impact of lab rats feed GM corn at levels that would be akin to a drug overdose in humans, it was debunked by a wide range of independent sci-

entists as just plain bad science. Food and Chemical Toxicology published his paper in 2012 and retracted it last fall. Now Environmental Sciences Europe has published it. CBAN claims there is inadequate study of the long-term impact of eating GM foods. Well, spend some time on the Internet and you can readily find lots of scientists with credentials to at least match Seralini's who think the health fears about GM foods are completely overblown.

Maybe the Health Canada system works just fine and the opponents don't like the results.

After all Canada is hardly a global leader in GM approvals. Perhaps a review of the Health Canada regulatory system would be worthwhile as long as it isn't done by the department. Nor should it start with preconceived notions. No matter how well it is carried out, one wonders if it could end this debate, especially given the ideology and emotion that drives it.

Another common complaint about GM foods is that they don't offer consumer benefit. What if GM wheat was available that could provide gluten free flour? That would even

benefit members of my own family. Then there's the story of Golden Rice, which could greatly relieve Vitamin D shortage in Asia, a major health crisis. And why does the issue of consumer benefit from GM crops never include the fact that they help farmers increase production and make a decent living?

It is 2014 and as GM crops have been with us for nearly two decades, one might expect any long-term problems to have manifested themselves by now. We have much bigger food issues to be concerned with.