

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The editorial staff of *California Agriculture* welcomes your letters, comments and suggestions. Please write to us at calag@ucop.edu or 1111 Franklin St., 6th floor, Oakland, CA 94607. Include your full name and address. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

When transgenes wander, he worries

Re: Norman Ellstrand's "When crop transgenes wander in California, should we worry?" (July-September 2006).

How many superweeds in our fields and pastures owe their existence to hybridization? We forget that the parent species of hybridized plants share common pathways of molecular evolution, and therefore "like" chemistries; the parent species have a much higher probability of evolving into the traited hybrid on their own, without human tampering.

Hybrids bring twigs on the tree of evolution together, under an umbrella of common plant chemistries, whereas genetic engineering will join the twig of one limb to the twig of another limb or to the limb itself, with a potential for radical new plant chemistries such that the definition of a species, namely the interbreeding of individuals, is challenged.

We don't have to pretend that we do transgenic modifications for the good of mankind when money is the goal, and we don't have to subject

Mother Earth to experiments without an assured endpoint. Are we going to create a transgenic world by default? Perhaps we should consider inoculating another planet in the galaxy with the experiments of our transgenic tinkering, and not be so readily willing to sacrifice our own and only life space to transgenic modifications.

Bud Hoekstra
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Asian students appreciate journals

Editor's note: California Agriculture recently donated 12 boxes of journals, including Science, Scientific American and California Agriculture, to Bridge to Asia (BTA). Since its founding in 1987, BTA has collected and shipped more than 5 million books and periodicals to 1,000 universities in China, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Thank you for the journal and book donations from your publication. The journals are a valuable collection and are certain to be greatly appreciated and well used by students and teachers in Asia.

Our collection efforts are ongoing, and we welcome you to share your interest in Asia's need for books and journals with friends and colleagues who may wish to help.

Newton Liu, Vice President
Bridge to Asia (www.bridge.org)

Correction

A formula was incorrect in "Cost benefit analysis conducted for nutrition education in California" (October-December 2006), on page 189 in both the "Calculation of direct benefits" box and table 2 footnote. The correct formula is:

$$A \times B \times C \times D = E$$

$$E \times F = \text{Benefits}$$

The authors (Joy and Goldman) regret the error.



California Agriculture

Peer-reviewed research and news published by the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California

VOLUME 61, NUMBER 1

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California Agriculture (ISSN 0008-0845) is published quarterly and mailed at periodicals postage rates at Oakland, CA, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send change of address "Form 3579" to *California Agriculture* at the above address.

RATES: Subscriptions free upon request in U.S.; \$24/year outside the U.S. After publication, the single copy price is \$5.00. Orders must include payment by check or international money order in U.S. funds, payable to UC Regents. MasterCard/Visa accepted; requests require signature and card expiration date. Please include complete address. For online ordering, go to <http://CaliforniaAgriculture.ucop.edu>.

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