

NEWS RELEASE

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GM comes under the microscope

The great GM debate is coming to Preston. On Thursday 10 July, local people will get the chance to decide for themselves whether genetically modified (GM) foods will be the answer to our prayers or an ecological disaster.

The debate will be chaired by Dr Peter Lumsden from the University of Central Lancashire. Like the BBC's 'Question Time', a panel of experts representing a range of views will be available to join in the cut and thrust and answer the audiences' questions.

Preston's debate is one of a series which have been held around the country since the beginning of June. Findings from the debates will be fed back to the Government, who will be considering its policy on GM later in the year.

GM Supporters claim that use of the technology will help in the fight against chronic food shortages in the third world, by producing disease and pest free, high-yield crops. Although the Government is keen to stress that both GM crops and foods have to undergo rigorous safety assessments before approval, public concern has been expressed about the possible long term effects on the environment.

"This is an emotive issue", says Dr Lumsden. "On which people have a range of views, and it's important that the issues involved are identified and discussed. It's also important that, having initiated a public debate, the Government takes on board views expressed at meetings such as the one this Thursday."

The debate takes place at 7.00 pm in the Greenbank Lecture Theatre, University of Central Lancashire. Everyone with an interest in the GM issue is encouraged to attend to ask questions and express their points of view. For more information, please contact Dr Peter Lumsden, Department of Environmental Management, University of Central Lancashire, tel: 01772 893917, email pjlumsden@uclan.ac.uk

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-Notes to editors follow-

Notes to editors:

1. Panel members include: Cheshire farmer Richard Ratcliffe, Professor Vivian Moses, Chairman of CropGen, Pete Riley, Friends of the Earth, Professor Malcolm Edmunds, Ecologist, University of Central Lancashire
2. Reporters and photographers are welcome to attend the debate. Please contact Dr Peter Lumsden, tel: 01772 893917, mob 07814 434 745 for more information.