



## **Soybeans: From Ballast to Biotech The Debate: Take a Point of View**

### Procedure

1. Divide students into groups of 3-4
2. Choose an issue.
  - What are the possible side effects of biotechnology for consumers? The environment?
  - Should GMO foods be labeled?
  - How should GMO foods be regulated?
  - What are the risks and benefits of GMO foods?
  - What are the environmental impacts of using biotechnology?
  - Can biotech be a solution to world hunger issues?
3. Assign (or let students choose) a “point of view:”
  - Environmental Scientists
  - Consumers
  - Producers/Farmers
  - Suppliers
  - Agricultural Scientists
  - Advocacy (watchdog) groups
  - Industry Leaders
  - Legislators
4. Choose a Forum:
  - Senate Hearing: Each point of view group gets 3 minutes to speak and questions from “senators.”
  - Debate: Choose two or more sides to debate an issue with time for rebuttal.
  - Panel Discussion: Representatives from different points of view take questions from “audience” with a facilitator.
  - Television Talk Show: Bring out different “guests” to be interviewed by a talk show host about an issue.
  - United Nations: Students represent different countries and question “experts” about risks and benefits to biotechnology.
  - Letter to the Editor: Different “points of view” craft letters to address one of the questions that are shared with the class.
5. Use “Listening and Learning” Note Cards during the Forum Presentations. Give each student 3-5 index cards and instruct them to write down one important fact/idea on each card they heard during the Forum Presentations. Instruct them to rank order completed cards from most compelling fact to least compelling. Sort the fact cards into piles representing “pro-biotech” and “con-biotech” information. Combine one student’s cards with cards from another student and do the same sorts, reaching consensus.
6. Reflect and Evaluate by answering the following questions.
  - Which viewpoint most consistently represents your own?
  - Choose a viewpoint (not your own) and defend it.
  - What else do you need to know in order to decide your stand on this issue?
  - What is the future of biotechnology?