



Media Invitation – 27 Aug 2009

**VIDEO SCREENING SESSION
of the
GMAC STUDENT REPORTERS' CHALLENGE 2009
on
"THE FACTS AND MYTHS OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS"
5 Sep 2009 (Saturday), 10 AM
Breakthrough/Discovery Theatrettes, Level 4, Matrix, Biopolis**

"If I eat genetically modified foods, will the foreign genes enter my cells and make me genetically modified as well? Are there any side effects?"

"I don't think there is anything wrong with genetically modified foods. They have not been shown to be unsafe. In fact, I think genetically modified foods can potentially help to solve the world's food shortage problem."

"I don't know much about genetically modified foods, but I think that they are unnatural."

"If genetically modified foods taste better, I will certainly like to try them!"

"For me, I don't really care about whether the food I eat have been genetically modified or not. I am more concerned if my food is high in cholesterol or fat....."

The above are some of the mixed responses that participants of the GMAC Student Reporters' Challenge received when they interviewed Residents of the Singapore Heartlands for their views towards genetically modified (GM) foods. The GMAC Student Reporters' Challenge 2009 is an inter-school educational video creation competition organized by the Genetic Modification Advisory Committee (GMAC) of Singapore.

THE GM CONTROVERSY

There is increasing adoption of GM crops in many parts of the world. Opponents are skeptical of the benefits of GM crops and GM foods, and question their safety on human health and the environment. Proponents, on the other hand, say that GM technology and GM crops hold promises in resolving food shortages and food security issues, and argue that GM foods are at least as safe as, if not safer, than their conventional counterparts.

ABOUT THE GMAC STUDENT REPORTERS' CHALLENGE 2009

In 2001 and 2005, GMAC conducted nation-wide surveys on Singaporeans' knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of GM technology and GM foods. The studies revealed that only about 20% of the Singapore population understood the basic concepts of genetic modification. Through GMAC's interactions with members of the public, we also noticed that some Singaporeans have developed misconceptions towards GMOs and GM foods, many a times due to influences from fallacious sources of information. Through a specialized sub-committee led by Professor Lee Sing Kong, who is Director of the National Institute of Education, GMAC seeks to dispel erroneous conceptions towards GMOs and GM foods by imparting, from an objective viewpoint, scientifically-sound information on the subject matter.

The GMAC Student Reporters' Challenge 2009 is GMAC's latest initiative in educating the public on GM-related issues. Participants of the competition have been tasked to create educational video clips to help demystify GM technology, GMOs, and GM foods, to average Singaporeans. Among other things, the Student Reporters have interviewed Residents of the Singapore Heartlands to find out what they understand, do not understand, or misunderstand about GM foods. Where the interviews reveal misconceptions towards GM foods, the Student Reporters have tried to, through their video creations, put forth scientifically-correct information to address the misunderstandings and inaccuracies.

VIDEO SCREENING SESSION OF THE GMAC STUDENT REPORTERS' CHALLENGE 2009

In groups of fives, a total of 130 students from 20 secondary schools in Singapore have taken up the Challenge. All entries to the competition have been reviewed by Preliminary Judging Panels comprising representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority, and the five Polytechnics' Schools of Life Sciences (or equivalent).

- ***Screening and Final Judging of Shortlisted Video Entries on 5 Sep 2009***

Entries shortlisted from the Preliminary Round of Judging will be presented and subjected to Final Judging at a Video Screening Session scheduled on 5 Sep 2009. Members of the Final Judging Panel include representatives from the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority; the Nanyang Technological University; the National University of Singapore; the Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory; and the Singapore Press Holdings. The audience will comprise the student participants as well as their teachers, family members, relatives, and friends.

- ***Debunking the Myths of GM foods – Q&A Session with Expert Panel***

Besides the screening of the shortlisted video entries, the Video Screening Session will also feature a Question and Answer component, where an expert scientific panel will answer questions posed by the audience, to provide facts and debunk myths on GM technology, GMOs, and GM foods.

- ***Prize Presentation***

The final results of the GMAC Student Reporters' Challenge 2009 will be announced towards the end of the Video Screening Session.

The Programme, and Member Composition of the Final Judging and Expert Q&A panels are given as Annex A and Annex B, respectively.

MEDIA INVITATION

Members of the Press are cordially invited to attend the Video Screening Session. Kindly **RSVP by Thursday, 3 Sep 2009.**

Issued by GMAC

For RSVP and enquiries, please contact GMAC Secretariat:

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About GMAC

The Genetic Modification Advisory Committee was established under the purview of the Ministry of Trade and Industry in April 1999 to oversee and advise on the research and development, production, use and handling of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in Singapore. Its objective is to ensure public safety while allowing for the commercial use of GMOs and GMO-derived products by companies and research institutions, in compliance with international standards. GMAC has also taken on a role in the creation and enhancement of public awareness of GMOs and GM-related issues, through the dissemination of scientifically-sound information on relevant subjects, from an objective viewpoint.

GMAC is currently chaired by Dr Ngiam Tong Tau, who is formerly the Chief Executive Officer of the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority, and comprises members drawn from various government agencies, universities, research institutions, and a consumer interest group.

For more information, visit www.gmac.gov.sg

VIDEO SCREENING SESSION
of the
GMAC STUDENT REPORTERS' CHALLENGE 2009
"The Facts & Myths of Genetically Modified Foods"
Saturday, 5 Sep 2009, 0930 – 1300
Breakthrough/Discovery Theatrettes, Level 4, Matrix, Biopolis

PROGRAMME

- 09.30 Registration
- 10.00 Welcome & Opening Remarks by Prof Lee Sing Kong (Director, National Institute of Education; Co-Deputy Chairman, GMAC; & Chairman, GMAC Subcommittee for Public Awareness)
- 10.15 Screening of Shortlisted Entries to the GMAC Student Reporters' Challenge 2009
(Part 1: Upper Secondary Category) - Presentation of Video Entries by:
- Raffles Institution
 - Nanyang Girls' High School
 - Hwa Chong Institution
- 10.50 Screening of Shortlisted Entries to the GMAC Student Reporters' Challenge 2009
(Part 2: Lower Secondary Category) - Presentation of Video Entries by:
- CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School
 - NUS High School of Mathematics and Science
 - Unity Secondary School
- **Tea Break (11.25 to 12.00)** -----
- 12.00 The Facts & Myths of Genetically Modified Foods - Questions and Answers Session with Expert Panel
- 12.40 Announcement of Results & Prize Presentation
- Presentation of Certificates of Participation
 - Upper Secondary Category
 - Lower Secondary Category
 - Presentation of Awards
 - Upper Secondary Category
 - Lower Secondary Category
- 13.00 Closing Remarks by Prof Lee Sing Kong

**FINAL ROUND JUDGING PANEL
FOR THE GMAC STUDENT REPORTERS' CHALLENGE 2009**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Chang Ai-Lien	Assistant News Editor Science Correspondent The Straits Times; & Member GMAC Subcommittee on Public Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assoc Prof Lim Tit Meng*	Associate Professor Department of Biological Sciences Faculty of Science National University of Singapore
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assoc Prof Peter Dröge*	Head Genomics and Genetics Division School of Biological Sciences Nanyang Technological University; & Chairman GMAC Subcommittee on the Release of Agriculture-related GMOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr Hong Yan*	Director (Plant Biotechnology) Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory; & Member GMAC Subcommittee on the Release of Agriculture-related GMOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr Choo Li Nah	Acting Director Policy and Corporate Communications Department Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore; & Member GMAC Subcommittee on Public Awareness

****Assoc Prof Lim Tit Meng, Assoc Prof Peter Dröge, and Dr Hong Yan will also serve on the Expert Panel for the Question and Answer component of the event, to which Prof Lee Sing Kong will be moderator.***

DIRECTIONS TO THE GMAC VIDEO SCREENING SESSION

A location map of Biopolis is given on the next page. Driving directions to the event venue are given below.

By Car

Traveling on **AYE from City**

- Exit left at Exit 8 North Buona Vista/NUH
- Keep to right lanes and turn right at traffic light. Drive straight towards North Buona Vista Rd
- Pass 4 traffic lights, turn right into North Buona Vista Drive

Traveling on **AYE from Jurong**

- Exit right at Exit 8 North Buona Vista/NUH
- Keep to right lanes and turn right at traffic light.
- Drive straight towards North Buona Vista Rd
- Pass 3 traffic lights, turn right into North Buona Vista Drive

No. of Traffic lights FROM AYE (CITY)	No. of Traffic lights FROM AYE (JURONG)	Prominent Landmarks
1st	-	Slip road from AYE
2nd	1st	Caltex Petrol Station on left
3rd	2nd	ACJC on left
4th	3rd	NTU development on right

Commonwealth Ave (City)

- Turn left into North Buona Vista Rd (MOE on your left)
- Turn left into North Buona Vista Drive

Commonwealth Ave (Jurong)

- Turn right into North Buona Vista Rd
- Turn left into North Buona Vista Drive

Parking

- Visitors' Parking at Basement 3 only (cash card parking: complimentary parking coupon will be given to you at the event).
- To go to the Matrix Building, please park at the ORANGE zone of Basement 3 and take Lift D to the Level 1 Lobby, before switching lifts to reach the event venue at Level 4
- Please note that parking in B2 is reserved for Season Parking only. Unauthorized parking may lead to the vehicle being wheel-clamped.

LOCATION MAP OF BIOPOLIS

