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The Future of Food and Genetic Technology in a “Post-Truth” World — Pamela Ronald



Dr. Pamela Ronald, UC Davis

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Written by
Kelvin Heppner

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Pamela Ronald

March 2, 2017



Oxford dictionary defines “post-truth” as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”

We’re seeing this term thrown around by the media in the context of recent politics, but these “post-truth” conditions are really nothing new for agriculture.

“This has been a problem in food and agriculture for a long time, especially with concerns about genetics and different types of breeding technologies,” says Dr. Pamela Ronald in this interview filmed following her keynote presentation at [FarmTech 2017](#) in Edmonton.

Ronald is a well-known plant geneticist based at UC Davis, where her lab has genetically engineered rice for resistance to diseases and tolerance to flooding and drought. Her 2015 TED Talk on genetic modification of food has been viewed almost 1.5 million times (watch it [here](#)).

As she notes, we’re seeing an incredible number of discoveries being made each week using genome editing and other new genetic technologies. If genetic engineering (or modification), which is roughly 40 years old, still faces major obstacles when it comes to public opinion, what does this “post-truth” wariness or distrust mean for new technologies that could be used to produce food?

“It’s really come into the limelight now with the current political situation. We have to try to continue to deliver real information,” she says.

Ronald joined us to discuss the future of food and genetic technology, the keys keeping it aligned with public views, as well as her thoughts on how new genetic technologies could fit into organic food systems (Ronald’s husband and co-author of “Tomorrow’s Table: Organic Farming, Genetics and the Future of Food” is an organic farmer):



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Kelvin Heppner

Kelvin Heppner is a field editor for Real Agriculture based near Altona, Manitoba. Prior to joining Real Ag he spent more than 10 years working in radio. He farms with his father near Rosenfeld, MB and is on Twitter at [@realag_kelvin](#)



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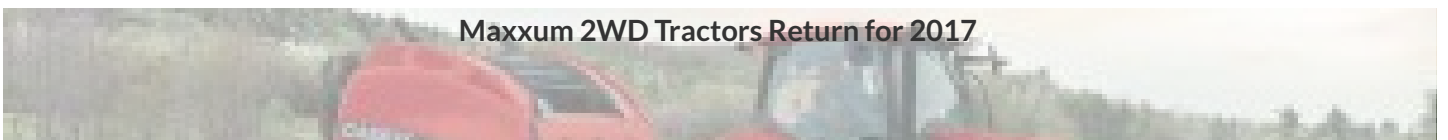
The 2016 harvest seems difficult to forget but it's time to forget and focus on the spring that lies ahead. It's bitterly cold across the west this week so it's hard to think about spring weather, but for anyone that has crop left out in the field you are definitely hoping for an open, dry...

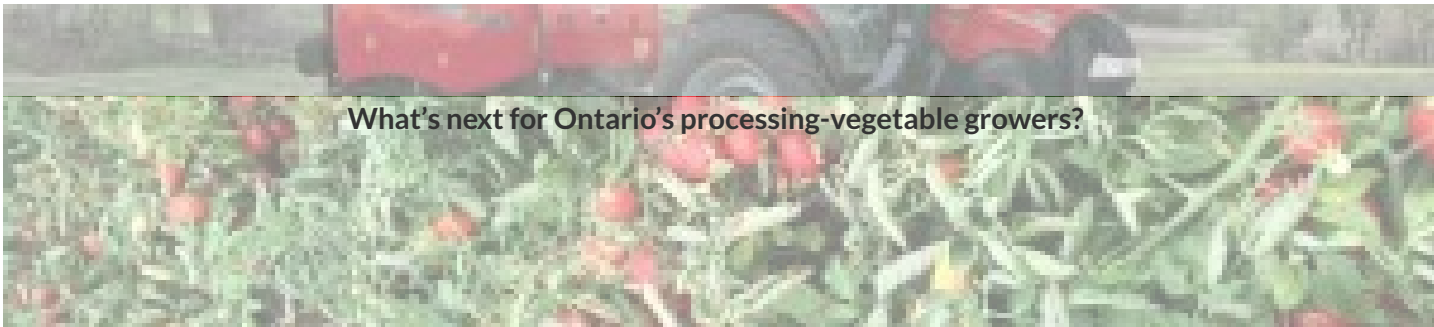
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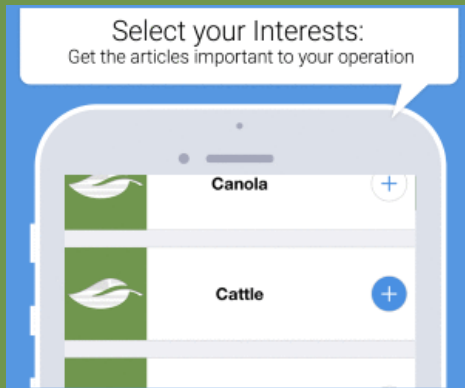
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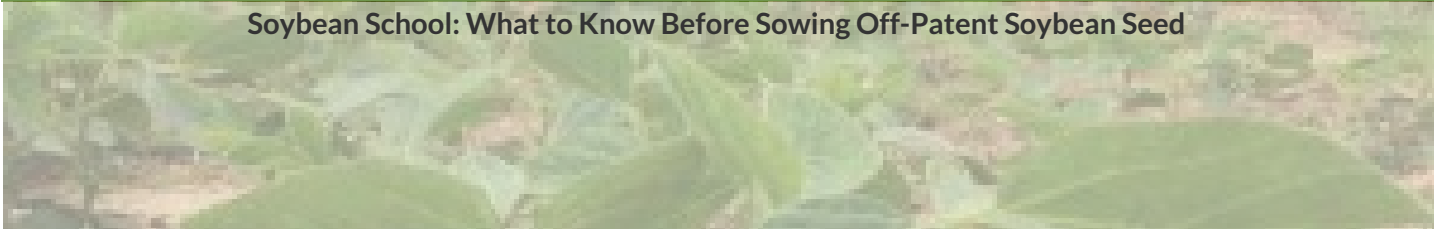




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