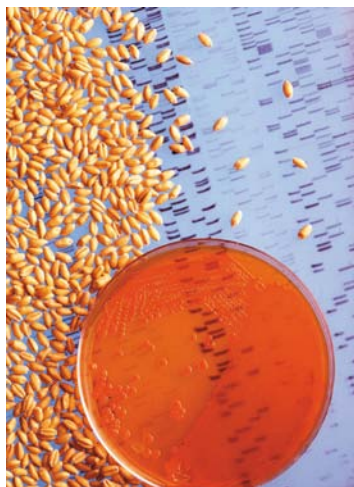


# Institute for Integrative Genome Biology Biotechnology Impacts Center

## About BIC

### INTRODUCTION

Biotechnology holds great promise. The potential of genetically modified organisms to increase agricultural productivity offers hope for feeding the Earth's growing population and raising nutritional intake among those currently impoverished, as well as the potential for improvements in health and the ability to cure and prevent diseases. The University of California is at the leading edge of this revolution with 1 out of 4 California biotech companies being founded by UC scientists. As such, we must also be stewards of this new technology. We must accept the responsibility of ensuring that the products of biotechnology are used wisely, with the least amount of negative impact on our environment, health and society.



### THE BIOTECHNOLOGY IMPACTS CENTER

The Biotechnology Impacts Center (BIC) is an academic research unit associated with the Institute for Integrative Genome Biology and the Center for Social and Economic Policy at the University of California, Riverside. Its mission is to promote research and education on all aspects of the social, economic, political, environmental, and ethical consequences of the biotechnology revolution. Established in 2000, BIC serves as a forum to identify the relevant policy issues, to act as a clearinghouse for credible information, and to initiate research that addresses the impacts of biotechnology. The result is an informed dialog among public interest groups, the biotechnology industry, academics, elected officials, and policy makers.

## Education

BIC also has an important educational mission to disseminate knowledge and address concerns about new and emerging developments in biotechnology. The BIC currently offers a graduate-level course titled "The Benefits and Risks of Agricultural Biotechnology," which is well-attended. The Center hopes to provide modest financial and academic support to graduate students in the humanities, the social sciences, and the life sciences. It encourages faculty mentoring of graduate students and the creation of hands-on research opportunities for undergraduate students. The

Center has offered visiting speakers' fora, seminars, a web-based working paper series to disseminate pre-publication findings of ongoing research projects, and conference support.

## Accomplishments

The Biotechnology Impacts Center held a major international conference in October 2003 on the scientific aspects and social, economic and environmental impacts of agricultural biotechnology. The meeting brought together life scientists, social scientists, bioethicists, and policy makers, as well as representatives from the biotechnology industry, the public, the media and non-governmental organizations to address major topics related to genetically modified organisms. In 2004, the Center was awarded an NSF Complexity Grant for \$1,545,000 for a project titled "Spatiotemporal Dynamics of Engineered Crop Genes: Biological and Human Constraints and Consequences." A follow-up symposium was held in Mexico City in September, 2006 that addressed the complex issue of introducing genetically modified maize into its country of origin. The Biotechnology Impacts Center has met with an enthusiastic response from faculty members in the social sciences, life sciences, and humanities.

## Leadership

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**Norman C. Ellstrand**  
BIC Director  
Professor of Genetics

Dr. Ellstrand has been conducting research on the environmental risks of agricultural biotechnology for almost two decades, focusing on the movement of transgenes into natural weed populations to produce crop-weed hybrids, hybridization as both a beneficial and detrimental factor in plant conservation, and gene flow as a factor in plant evolution.

Richard Sutch  
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Dr. Sutch has long studied the consequences, intended and unintended, of economic and social systems. His current interests include the economic consequences and policy implications of agricultural biotechnology and immigration. Dr. Sutch directs the UCR Center for Social and Economic Policy.

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