A Quest for the Right Public Messaging

Industry Perspective on RNAi solutions Vocabulary

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Not just America!

Professional Communication Consultant Survey

Research Participants:

24 individual, in-depth interviews (30-45 minutes)

- **UNITED STATES**
  - **Growers/agribusiness**
  - **Value chain**
  - **Science communicators**

- **CANADA**
  - **Growers/agribusiness**
  - **Value chain**
  - **Science communicators**

- **EUROPE**
  - **Growers/agribusiness**
  - **Science communicators**

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Communications Consultant Working to Frame Landscape, Develop Talking Points

WHAT IS RNAi?

Some have called RNAi a process that “silences” or “knocks out” genes. This is roughly accurate, because RNAi prevents a gene’s instructions from being carried out. Others have called it a “self-correcting system,” because it evolved to stop the formation of problematic proteins.

WHAT MIGHT REASSURE?

RNA-based products will be tested and regulated just like all other agricultural products. In the U.S., the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture have specific and detailed regulations that apply to both biotech plants and pesticides, and all RNA-based products will have to meet those requirements.

WHAT ELSE MIGHT PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW?

The RNAi process is well-understood, and can be harnessed to develop products that solve very specific problems—just like keys are designed to open only one specific lock.

RNA-based products include (but are not limited to) biotech plants and pesticides, and they are nothing new. Over the past 25 years, several genetically modified crops that leverage the RNAi process have been approved and introduced. These include papayas that can resist viruses, as well as the very first commercial crop developed with biotechnology, the Flavr Savr tomato, which was designed to produce less of a protein that causes softening, and which was introduced to consumers in 1998.

Words to **Use** . . .and Words to **Lose**

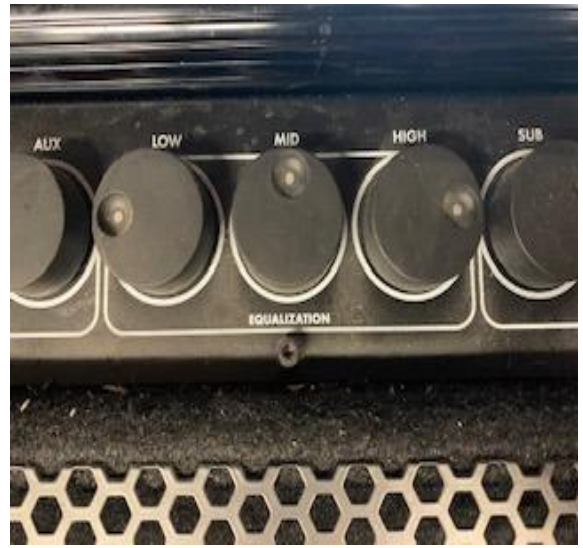
Avoid sweeping claims:

Do not overpromise what it can do, or implying that RNAi it is **the** solution.

Focus on smart incremental advances made by science, rather than revolutionizing technologies to offer farmers new solutions.

Don't describe RNAi as "nothing new" or "well-understood":

Instead, focus on the fact that science is constantly exploring nature for information that can be used to solve problems and benefit society.



Avoid negative words:

Use neutral phrases and metaphors in descriptions (e.g., dimmer switches, dial up or down) rather than wording likely to trigger instinctive worry ("silences," "knocks out").

Don't focus on the expediency of the product development process (e.g., the speed, cost, or efficiency of product development):

These kinds of messages trigger concerns about lack of thoroughness in testing and safety reviews, and often lack credibility.