

Subject: Re: Talking about Gene Drive

From: Kevin Esvelt <esvelt@mit.edu>

Date: 4/11/2017 6:59 PM

To: "James, Stephanie (FNIH) [T]" <sjames@fnih.org>

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Dear Stephanie,

Thank you for the excellent suggestion and the generous offer.

With respect to the attached draft agenda, might I suggest that the event focus on effective ways to discuss our work on gene drive with interested communities and citizens as well as journalists? Holding sessions on 'gene drive messaging', 'message testing initiatives', and even 'communication strategies' could be misconstrued as a concerted attempt to sell the technology to the public. Needless to say, this should not be anyone's goal.

A workshop designed to improve our ability to communicate effectively, productively invite concerns and criticism, and cooperatively work with communities who might be affected (as your the text of your message suggested) would be extremely helpful.

Many thanks,

Kevin

P.S. This may be a good place to invite suggestions for a suitable word to describe self-sustaining gene drive systems that could theoretically spread into every population of the target species. Ideally, it would have geographic connotations similar to 'local', which has proven quite effective, but describe

the opposite. The term 'global', which originated at the NCSU workshop, fails communicate the fact that any potential effects would be limited to regions harboring the target species, while 'self-sustaining' does not communicate meaningful information. Please share any suitable candidates.

On Tue, Apr 11, 2017 at 5:16 PM, James, Stephanie (FNIH) [T] <sjames@fnih.org> wrote:

Dear colleagues,

The Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) is considering sponsoring a one day workshop on the topic of “Talking about Gene Drive” – to be held just before the annual American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) meeting on November 4, 2017, in Baltimore, MD. We are sending this preliminary email to gauge the level of interest in such a workshop.

We are reaching out with this email to a broad group of researchers and supporters of gene drive because we believe there is an important window of opportunity right now to think collectively about how to discuss this new technology productively with the public. How each individual project and program pursues its own communications strategy will impact public acceptance of the technology more generally, so this seems like a subject ripe for interaction and cooperation.

The intent of the workshop would be to:

- discuss how gene drive technology is being described in the media and at venues such as the Convention on Biological Diversity
- consider ways to work together to enhance communication and clarify public perception about gene drive technology
- share some basic communications skills that might come in handy in the future

A draft agenda is attached.

We are suggesting to hold this workshop in conjunction with the ASTMH meeting because many interested parties likely are already planning to attend that meeting (apologies to those who aren't!).

Please let me know by reply email if you would be interested in participating and/or if you have colleagues who might like to attend. If there is sufficient enthusiasm, FNIH will start organizing the logistics and get back to you with more information.

Best regards,

Stephanie

Stephanie James, PhD, FASTMH

Director, Science Division

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