**Unit 2 Handout 6: Fact Sheet and IRR/Literature Review**

**A. Fact Sheet (and other items)**

Fact sheets -- (.gov; .edu) sometimes called grey sheets, literally, are single documents.  Most often, however, they are on physical rather than psychological or sociological entities.  For an example, Google "bedbugs fact sheet" and click on the first link (the cms one).

Popular press -- (.com) newspaper, magazine, e-zine publications, even blogs as long as they are from reputable sources (more on that soon).  We use articles like these as background, or secondary, sources, primarily because, as one writer put it, “If it's reported in the New York Times, it's big in science”.

Peer-Reviewed/Academic Journals -- (.com, sometimes; .edu) these are reports of research written by researchers, reviewed by researchers, and published for other researchers.  This is the gold standard for your own studies.  These have the same general structure:  Abstract/ Keywords/ Lit Review or Introduction/ Methods or Sample Design and Instruments/ Results/ Conclusion/ Bibliography. Once you find THE article for your IWA, (not IRR) this becomes your key article.  Use it to find more. (More on that next semester)

*List one positive and one negative aspect of each of the three sources listed above. (You may work together for this one)*

Find one fact sheet relevant to your general topic. It does not need to be 100% related –

e.g. If you are going to research memory and music, it is going to be near impossible to find one fact sheet that relates to both of those topics. Finding a fact sheet about memory OR music would be acceptable, and potentially helpful.

*Which government/institution put this fact sheet out?*

*What is one interesting thing that you learned from this fact sheet?*

*How could this fact sheet potentially help you as you work toward beginning your research project?*

**B. Fact Sheet Activity**

Pick any topic that you feel like you could write a fact sheet about. It can be absolutely anything at all (i.e. whatever area you just chose, Harry Potter books, popular music, Murrow High School’s Art Institute, etc.) and can be serious or silly, but it should be 100% accurate. Type up a small fact sheet about this topic with:

* At least 3 questions that you ask and answer about said topic
* General knowledge facts (at least 3)
* A summation about the importance of this topic for society, the world, the universe, etc.

**C. IRR/Literature Review**

A literature review is a scholarly paper, which includes the current knowledge including substantive findings, as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Your IRR you are writing for this class will be a literature review, meaning it is NOT ARGUMENTATIVE. Below you will read an IRR from a previous Seminar class.

Note: Your first draft of your paper is not expected to be as polished as the following reading. This proposal was achieved after roughly 20 edited drafts.

The Political Impact Genetically Modified Corn has on the Health of the Americans

**Introduction**

Before genetic engineering became a common occurrence in daily life, people’s diets had previously consisted of untouched crops. According to the United States Food and Drug Administration, genetic engineering is defined as making “targeted changes to a plant’s genetic makeup to give the plant a new desirable trait” (United States Food and Drug Administration,

2018). This new way of farming preferred crops, specifically corn, has forever changed the way Americans eat food today. Currently, over 90% of the corn grown in the United States is genetically modified, with 33 different versions produced (United States Department of Agriculture, n.d). Yet even with much of America’s corn involving genetic engineering, many still ponder whether these crops are safe to eat, and how this may affect their health. Thus, by examining the United States’ laws on GMO labeling, organizations that oversee genetic engineering, and the foreign affairs the US has with other countries, it’s shown time and time again that these foods have no effect on the health of Americans.

**Labeling and Health Concerns**

With genetically modified corn appearing largely in the American diet, the United States was obligated to devise laws that could regulate these crops. Previously, labeling packages that contained genetically modified ingredients was an optional choice corporations could make on their products. This changed in 2014 when Vermont passed a law that authorized companies with GMOs used in their brands to label them on packaging. Two years later, the law officially went into effect, with these meals now stating “produced with genetic engineering” or other variants. Although the law only applied to the tiny state, it has had a nationwide effect, as companies have decided to apply those standards to all of the products they sell everywhere, instead of creating

separate batches (Strom, 2016). Other states soon proceeded to follow suit, and eventually, former president Barack Obama decided to pass a law that required all of the United States to label packages that contain genetically modified ingredients. This federal law gave corporations more leniency compared to Vermont by allowing companies to either offer the warning in words, through a 1-800 telephone number, or a QR code (Congress, n.d). Although these labeling laws are in place, some suspect they are still quite convoluted for consumers. In the lawsuit *Lee V Conagra Brands*, Wesson vegetable oil was sued because their claim that their oils are “100% natural” was deceiving since they use genetically modified corn and other engineered

ingredients. The court decision was based on the United States Food and Drug Administration’s view on what natural is, which is any product that does not have “added color, synthetic substances, and flavors” (Drye, 2017). Because of this, the court sided with Wesson, stating that their use of natural doesn’t violate any laws. These laws are put in place as a means to address

the health concerns around genetically engineered corn, whether it’s through a clear definition of

“natural” or consumers demanding labels.

**Organizations Overlooking Genetic Modification**

The mass use of modified corn has also called for many United States organizations to apply their own set of regulations. The three main organizations that regulate GMOs are the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), The U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Together, the organizations form the Coordinated Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology, which overlooks different areas of

creating and distributing GMOs (USDA, 2018). The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service deals with diseases and insects that attack the crops. Meanwhile, the Environment Protection

Protection Agency manages the sale, distribution, and use of pesticides. Finally, the Food and Drug Administration oversees both the safety and proper labeling of these crops. Within the FDA, the Plant Biotechnology Consultation Program was created in the 1990s to work with developers that create new genetically modified plant versions to ensure it’s safe for the public. While promising, it’s not mandatory for the developers to work with the program (FDA, n.d). Each agency guarantees the safety of the American health by supervising all the steps the modified corn must go through before it’s handed to consumers. Because of this, there is no negative health impact for Americans, as the food is clearly deemed safe.

**Foreign Affairs with the United States Involving Genetic Engineering**

The United States is not the only country that manages genetically engineered corn, hence the need for regulations that are essential in foreign affairs with the U.S. In a case against Syngenta, a settlement of $1.4 billion was paid after the company released a new genetically modified corn called Agrisure Viptera. China, one of the country’s biggest buyers of corn at the time, was being traded the product without their knowledge, who in turn rejected millions of tons of corn that were imported. China later approved of Viptera, but until then, the loss of a large consumer caused prices to drop, as well as an economic uproar from farmers (Raymond, 2017). This case demonstrates the importance of communication between countries with different

values on genetically modified corn. According to Wendan Wang, who has a Ph.D. with extensive research into genetically engineered foods, China has a stricter labeling law compared to the United States that includes mandatory rules on fonts and other minor details. If the requirements are not met, heavy fines or even a suspension of license will be dealt with (Wang,

2016). This harsh law is explained with the GMO index rating, which rates countries from 0-1 on

how strict its attitude on genetic engineering is. China has a score of 0.5, meanwhile, the United States has one of 0.39 (Vigani, Raimondi, Olper, 2010). With only 2 out of 61 surveyed countries banning GMOs, it shows how genetically modified corn must have no impact on

peoples’ health, as many countries allow both the growth and import of this type of corn for their citizens. If the corn was unsafe, then it most likely would be banned from consumption. **Unreliable Argument**

While it has been validated that genetically engineered corn has no effect on the health of Americans, many are still skeptical and seem to have evidence that proves otherwise. Jeffrey Smith, founder and executive director of the Institute for Responsible Technology, has multiple negative claims about genetically engineered corn. He states that GMOs are unhealthy because the number of Americans with three or more health problems have dramatically risen from seven percent to thirteen percent in nine years, specifically with problems such as allergies, autism, and digestive issues. He also voices that by combining genes from a foreign species and the plant, harmful side effects can occur. While this sounds substantial, the evidence Smith provides is not reliable. Despite these health problems apparently on the rise, Smith himself makes the point that there “is not sufficient research to confirm that GMOs are a contributing factor” (Smith, 2017). When Smith also makes the claim that genetic engineering can create harmful side effects, he gives no examples of this occurring. Finally, he proves himself to be extremely biased, as most

of his other work is against genetic modification. Because of his lack of evidence to back up his claims and his bias, this source is not reliable, and so genetically modified corn is still verified as harmless.

**Conclusion**

Genetically engineered corn greatly impacts the United States and how it functions without any crippling health effects. Laws dedicated to labeling products with GMOs were brought into effect in order to educate Americans about the food they eat. Meanwhile, agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency all work together to ensure the agriculture being grown and distributed is safe to consume. Finally, the United States has to respect the attitudes other countries may have with engineered crops in order to successfully trade. Thus, because these crops must follow many regulations and safety checks, genetically modified corn has no impact on the *List three interesting statements/facts from the proposal and explain why you found them interesting.*

Reminders for your own paper:

Everything you hand in must be double-spaced

The goal is to not use quotations in your proposal – paraphrase instead.

Some people began their papers with quotes from “famous” people. Make sure you note why they are famous. (i.e. *Actor* Joseph Gordon-Levitt once said…)

Proofread your paragraphs – many careless grammatical errors.

Stay away from contractions (i.e. can’t, don’t, won’t)

Use active verbs instead of passive voice (i.e. Brutus *stabbed* Caesar instead of Caesar *was stabbed* by Brutus)

Some paragraphs were too “playful” – maintain professional tone as you bob and weave through humor.