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By Martyn Fisher

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Panorama stokes debate on GM food production

Leading figures associated with the UK food and farming industry weigh into the debate generated by the BBC TV show



Ex-NFU president Peter Kendall backed the show

BC One TV show Panorama generated waves of debate on Twitter following its most recent episode last night (8 June) on the subject of GM food.

Presenter Tom Heap talked to scientists, politicians and farmers from across the globe to unearth the latest in the movement.

The programme started with Heap interviewing a GM aubergine grower in Bangladesh, followed by an organic aubergine grower in the same country.

The show then met with UK-based Jonathan Jones and his team, who are developing a "game changing" potato by adding genes to it to help protect it from pests.

Heap also met with the former boss of anti-GM group Greenpeace, Stephen Tindale, who has now changed his mind

on the issue: "The overwhelming majority of scientists think it's safe, and I think it's morally unacceptable to stand out against these new technologies," Tindale said.

On Twitter, ex-NFU president Peter Kendall tweeted his support for the show, writing: "Well done #Panorama and @tomheapmedia for helping to open up the debate on GM to a wider audience. More facts and less scaremongering needed".

Others, though, criticised the show's lack of balance, with one Twitter user claiming that this particular episode of Panorama felt like it was a broadcast produced on behalf of a chemical spray giant.

Elsewhere, Helen Browning, Soil Association chief executive, said: "GM is a huge distraction. It is diverting a

massive amount of time, effort and attention from the really crucial issues facing food and farming – like looking after our soils.

"We have already degraded 25 to 40 per cent of soils worldwide, and unless we work very hard to reverse this damage, it will be impossible to feed the growing population healthily."