

Welcome to Minnesota.

As Minnesota's number one salesman I am very happy that you chose to come to Minneapolis for this important conference.

One of the nice things about traveling to Minnesota for a conference is you can walk down the street and check out just who the heck these people are that elected Jesse Ventura.

If you like it here I hope you'll stay. With the downturn in the economy we can use all the new taxpayers we can get.

However, keep in mind that if you did move here you would pay a lot less taxes that you would have before Jesse Ventura was elected.

In fact, did you know that since I was elected we have reduced taxes so much that by the year 2003 Minnesota taxpayers will save over \$4.48 billion dollars on their tax bill?

But seriously, you are here for an important meeting and I want to thank you for your work in the field of biotechnology.

As agricultural producers, agricultural processors and as researchers you know that biotechnology has great potential as a tool we can use to efficiently and safely provide food for the world's growing population.

But like any technology, biotechnology must be carefully evaluated to make sure that it does not have negative effects on our environment and our lives. But people should know that bioengineering has had positive effects on our food production for years.

Personally, I am very encouraged by the development of Bt corn and I am told that Bt corn can effectively reduce pesticide applications and as a result lower production costs to farmers.

These are very positive results.

However, your job is to carefully study this technology and have honest debates about likely benefits and risks.

But we cannot be too quick to write off technology that can produce things like golden rice, a vitamin-enriched variety of rice that can save thousands or millions of people in third world countries from blindness and malnutrition.

In many ways science is a lot like politics. No matter how sure you are about something—some one is going to disagree with your conclusions.

Governor Jesse Ventura
USDA Conference on Biotechnology
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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Good luck with your meeting and thank you for your hard work on this very difficult issue.