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# Cold War Collaboration and the 'American Challenge': The European Society for Nuclear Methods in Agriculture

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## Abstract

Session: Transnational science during the Cold War, Santesmases, Lindee, Creager, Krige, Chaderevian, Barahona, Smocovitis, Suarez-Diaz, Zachmann In 1969, physicists, biologists, agricultural experts and engineers established a political cross-block European Society for Nuclear Methods in Agriculture (ESNA) that claimed to both improve the world food situation and to limit environmental pollution. In order to achieve this goal, a new transdisciplinary research field was to be created that was named "nuclear agriculture", by analogy to the highly prestigious nuclear medicine. Nuclear research in agriculture and food grew into an area of cross-bloc collaboration and interaction. Here scientists broke open the politically fortified boundaries of the Cold War world and contributed actively to an emerging policy of détente. Whereas Eisenhower's Atoms-for-Peace initiative emerged in the spirit of containment and promoted collaboration with an impetus of American control, the scientists who participated in ESNA strove for European integration in the area of science in order to mobilize more resources and to enhance their own positions in their particular national contexts. By envisioning ESNA as a means to improve European performance in science and technology, the society's initiators connected ESNA's founding to the on-going West European discourse on the growing technological gap between the US and Western Europe. Thus, ESNA was to become part of the European response to the American challenge in science and engineering. This paper sets out to explore, how did this society transform Eisenhower's vision of the peaceful atom and what position did ESNA acquire within the Cold War world.

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