

World Food Prize goes to those who made GM plants possible

The following is an editorial summary.

The World Food Prize — the “Nobel Prize of food” — has been given to three people: Marc Van Montagu, founder and chairman of the Institute of Plant Biotechnology Outreach at Ghent University in Belgium; Mary-Dell Chilton, founder and researcher at Syngenta Biotechnology; and Robert Fraley, chief technology officer at Monsanto.

According to the Associated Press:

Van Montagu and Chilton independently developed the technology in the 1980s to stably transfer foreign genes into plants, a discovery that set up a race to develop tools to genetically engineer plants. It allowed other scientists to incorporate genetic traits in plants to better withstand drought, extreme heat and to fight off pests and disease. Fraley was the first to successfully transfer immunity to specific bacteria into a plant.

Fraley genetically engineered the first herbicide-resistant soybean in 1996.

The inclusion of a Monsanto executive among the winners has led to harsh criticism of the award and its ties to corporate farming.

Read the full story here: [World Food Prize goes to 3 biotech researchers who made genetically modified plants possible](#)

Additional Resources:

- [The World Food Prize homepage](#)
- [“World Food Prize goes for work on biotech crops.”](#) USA Today

The articles below highlight the inclusion of Monsanto’s Robert Fraley among the winners. Mother Jones, in particular, offers a highly critical dissection of the Food Prize and its funding.

- [“The World Food Prize, Brought to You by Monsanto,”](#) Mother Jones
- [“And The Winner Of The World Food Prize Is ... The Man From Monsanto,”](#) NPR
- [“Executive at Monsanto Wins Global Food Honor,”](#) New York Times