

Governmental regulation hurts SynthBio more than IP rights

In an article for Biology Fortified, Drew Kersher responds to a July 12 Slate op-ed by [Frederick Kaufman](#). In the op-ed, Kaufman blamed corporation seed breeders and their use of intellectual property rights (IPRs) as the barriers to technologies for food security by the open-source synthetic bio community.

Here, Kersher responds by arguing that corporations and their patents are not significant barriers to food security technologies that come from emerging synthetic bio methods. Rather, the primary barrier, she argues, will be unnecessary regulation imposed by anti-synthetic bio protesters.

Her arguments are based in what has occurred so far with established agricultural biotechnologies (such as GMOs).

Kersher explains that regulations on current biotech methods have imposed millions in monetary costs, wasted thousands of employee hours, and delayed biotech innovations for years in United States and Europe. Once a biotechnology enters the regulatory system years pass without a decision due to regulatory over-reaching, direct political pressure, and continuous NGO agitation through petitions and litigation.

In a word of caution to the Slate author Kaufman, Kersher writes: ‘recognize that the obstacles in reality to an open source cornucopia are in NGO opposition and regulatory regimes. Intellectual property rights and private commercial efforts are neither necessarily nor directly in conflict with open source genetic engineering and synthetic biology.’

Read the full, original story here: [Bumps on the road to the Open-Source Cornucopia](#)

- **Additional resources:**
- [“Let’s Make Genetically Modified Food Open-Source”](#), Slate
- [“GE regulation: More may be necessary, but need not inhibit innovation”](#), Genetic Literacy Project