

## Brazil reevaluating sterile seed technology; Anti-GMO groups hype 'terminator' scare

Brazil is reconsidering its ban on so-called "terminator" seeds, which are genetically modified to be sterile and cannot produce offspring. Under the Brazil's biosafety law of 2005, they are prohibited in all cases—not even research is allowed.

The issue is more theoretical than real, at this point. No company has ever commercialized a biotech trait that resulted in the commercialization of sterile seeds. Monsanto publicly committed in 1999 not to commercialize sterile seed technology in food crops. However, anti-GMO groups say they are concerned that sterile seeds could be developed and used for non-food crops, such as GM eucalyptus trees, which are grown for paper products.

Environmental groups say that the technology threatens the livelihood of small farmers, who would be forced to buy new seeds every year from the agriculture companies. However, all farmers, organic and conventional, who buy patented hybrid seeds must purchase new seeds every year, and have done so for 80 years.

Environmental groups say there would be "global consequences," but agriculture companies say that the technology could be used to stop cross-pollination of GM crops with organic or conventionally-grown crops.

Groups who own land in Brazil have been pushing Congress to allow the possible use of the technology if it is developed. The proposed measure "is likely to go to a full vote as early as next Tuesday, or soon after the Christmas recess." Environmental groups are worried that if Brazil, one of the world's largest agriculture markets, allows the technology, there could be a global "domino effect" in favor of approval.

**Read the full, original story: [Unease among Brazil's farmers as Congress votes on GM terminator seeds](#)**