

State of the planet: GMOs not just about crops

While much attention is focused on genetically modified foods and the debate over their safety, fewer people are aware that many other genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and cells are in development.

These genetic modifications include new crops and food products, but also trees that have been wiped out by disease, animals altered to produce useful products and microorganisms engineered to combat cancer. Shahid Naeem, director of the Earth Institute Center for Environmental Sustainability, and Matt Palmer, senior lecturer at Columbia University's Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, offer their perspective on these new developments in a new article.

The public needs to be aware of these developments, but need we be afraid of them? Palmer believes that GMOs offer benefits such as productivity and disease resistance, and may have advantages that promote conservation, public health and adaptation to climate change. The facts are that the evidence is strong for many of the advantages they offer, he says, while the disadvantages and risks are still more hypothetical than realized.

Read the full, original article: [Genetic Modifications You May Not Know About](#)