

## In response to Grist's Johnson, Mother Jones' Tom Philpott argues GMOs lead ag down wrong path

Tom Phillpot, *Mother Jones* environmental reporter who previously wrote for *Grist*, takes issue with Nathaneal Johnson's series on GMOs, and in particular Johnson's claim in his summary article that "None of it matters"—that the consequences of the debate are less than meets the eye.

Before I respond to Nathanael Johnson's [assertion](#) that the "stakes are so low" in the debate over GMOs, I want to address a smaller point. "The debate isn't about *actual* genetically modified organisms — if it was we'd be debating the individual plants, not GMOs as a whole," Johnson writes.

That's a good place to start: actually existing GMOs. What traits are on the market today, in use by farmers? First, I'll note that there's no shortage of land devoted to GMOs. Since the novel seeds hit the market in 1996, global GM crop acreage has expanded dramatically, reaching 420 million acres by 2012, [reports](#) the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications. That's a combined landmass more than four times larger than [California](#). The pro-GMO ISAAA hails this expansion as "fastest adopted crop technology in the history of modern agriculture."

Yet, for all of that land devoted to GMOs, there are just two traits in wide use: herbicide resistance and pest resistance (Bt). Note, in the below ISAAA chart, the "<1%" at the bottom. That represents the percentage of all global GMO acres planted in crops that aren't either herbicide- or pesticide-tolerant: that is to say, less than 1 percent.

**Read the full, original article:** [Crop flops: GMOs lead ag down the wrong path](#)