

GM food just the latest chapter in 10,000 years of high-tech agriculture

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) were introduced commercially for agriculture in the United States in the mid 1990s. Anti-GMO activists and entrepreneurs have called for labeling of foods made from GMOs or for their outright ban. Among the numerous reasons for opposition is that GMOs are products of science, not nature.

However, agriculture is by definition the manipulation of nature to meet the desired ends of people. The creation of GMOs is sophisticated, but in fact agriculture is a high-tech revolution in progress that began 10,000 years ago.

Adopting the transformational technologies of agriculture ended the nomadic life of following the food supply in a seasonal rhythm. This allowed people to settle into stable and complex social groups culminating in cities and nation states. Consequently, most of us, at least in the Western world, eat food produced by others.

The anti-GMO movement is symptomatic of a growing interest in taking control of the food we eat. Agribusiness has not acknowledged this, and has only taken steps to increase distrust. As long as food is produced by strangers, consumers must be in control of their relationship with suppliers. To do this, they must be educated about agriculture, and advocate for solutions that promote public health, recognizing that many of them will involve new technologies.

Read the full, original article: Don't fear GMOs: Genetically modified food is just the latest chapter in 10,000 years of high-tech agriculture