

Scientists and farmers reject proposed GM crop ban in Jackson, Oregon, call it 'threat' to agriculture

The idea of banning genetically modified plants seems like folly to some scientists who work in crop technology, not to mention farmers who have grown GMOs for years.

Martina Newell-McLoughlin, director of the International Biotechnical Program at University of California at Davis, grew up in Ireland, where the threat of potato famine reared its head over the centuries. "That's the reason 14 million descendents from Ireland are here," she said in a phone interview last week.

Barry Bushue, president of the Oregon Farm Bureau, said all local Farm Bureaus in the state are against the measures in Jackson and Josephine counties. "We represent farmers from one acre up the scale, we've got organic board members and conventional board members," Bushue said. "We represent the gamut. We think this threatens all forms of agriculture."

Besides the Farm Bureau, the list of opponents of the GMO measures is long, and includes the Oregon Cattleman's Association, Oregonians for Food and Shelter, and the Oregon Dairy Farmer's Association.

Newell-McLoughlin said the grocery store would scarcely be recognizable today without genetically modified plants, some of the techniques going back hundreds of years. "A lot of people aren't familiar with the degree we've been modifying crops the last 100 years," she said.

Read the full, original article: Supporters maintain genetically modified crops safe, beneficial