

## Hawaii island GMO ban threatens future of university-based independent research

Hawaii County set itself apart from much of the rest of the state in December by effectively banning the large biotech seed companies that have become a major, though controversial, part of Hawaii agriculture. But with a ban also on the outdoor testing of transgenic crops, can the Big Island, home to genetically modified papaya, still be a place for genetic research?

Six months later, the answer might be clearly no for some researchers while a bit hazy for others.

Because of the law, Russell Nagata, Hawaii County administrator for the University of Hawaii's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, said his staff will not pursue genetic engineering. "It will prevent us from using biotech as a solution" to agricultural issues, he said following a panel discussion on genetic modification Thursday evening.

Scientists interviewed say growing modified crops, that are still under development, in open fields is necessary to test their effectiveness. Under the county's law, testing can occur but it must be done indoors. At the time the bill was adopted, Nagata said his office was not conducting any genetic research. For those with projects already in progress, the law might provide less certainty.

**Read the full, original article:** [GMO ban, research at odds?](#)