

GM not just about commodity farming: How it can rescue threatened coffee, chocolate, wine, bananas and OJ

Many anti-GM campaigners lambast crop biotechnology because the first generation of genetic modification focused on commodity crops such as corn, soybeans and cotton. But in what's being called Crop Biotech 2.0, the focus is shifting to everyday consumer foods—some facing possible extinction, threatened by disease.

What if premium coffee, gourmet chocolate, fine California wine, bananas, or not-from-concentrate orange juice become costly or scarce? Would that matter to you? The fact is, there are significant threats to the future production of those crops. Yet, because of the influence of the anti-GMO movement, we are far less prepared to deal with these threats than we could have been.

Pests are nothing new, and they have often disrupted agriculture in the past. However there are two unique aspects of our times that exacerbate such risks:

1. With ever-increasing global travel and commerce, new exotic pathogens, weeds, and insect pests are spread around the world at a faster rate than ever before. These create severe problems which threaten entire crops
2. As climate changes, pests are often able to thrive in new places or at different times of year than in the past, creating much more difficult control issues.

This enhanced potential for existential pest threats is particularly problematic for many of our favorite luxury food and beverage crops. What we really appreciate about those crops has to do with complex quality factors. They are also perennial crops.

You can't just breed a new pest resistant variety of these crops because it is so hard to maintain the quality, and because each generation of seed takes years to produce. Conventional genetic solutions would take decades at best, and the new pest challenges don't give us that luxury.

Read the full, original article: [Five tasty reasons to reconsider GMO crops](#)