

Filipino scientists forced to bring petition against GM field trial ban to Supreme Court

There has been talk about the impending legal battle concerning a petition filed by scientist-researchers from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). The petition has to do with the writ of *kalikasan* that was slapped on them by the Court of Appeals (CA).

The writ bans the scientist-researchers from conducting field trials for a genetically modified crop called *Bacillus Thuringiensis* (BT) talong. The writ was imposed based on a petition filed by Greenpeace, an international environmental organization.

The growing interest in the case, which is now before the Supreme Court (SC), is understandable. There are two possible outcomes here: the SC will grant the petition of the UPLB group, which would mean the lifting of the writ and allowing them to finish their field trials; or the SC will uphold the CA's position, which means that the ban on the field trials becomes permanent, which will prevent the UPLB savants from continuing their work.

This is interesting, because the SC's cognizance of this issue may have transformed the global debate on modern agricultural biotechnology from a purely scientific issue into a purely legal tussle. The debate used to be only between Greenpeace and the local science community, led by the UPLB scientist-researchers.

When the honorable members of the SC look into this matter, they will view it through the lenses of the Philippine Constitution. They will ask whether or not the rights guaranteed under the law have been upheld and protected. They will examine whether or not the inviolable due-process principle has been followed.

If we want to find out whether or not biotechnology is good for a country looking for solutions to hunger and pests, we may have to stick to the scientific debate.

Read the full, original article: [Biotechnology: A scientific issue that has turned legal](#)