

Public fears stall approval of GM crops for commercial planting in China

Despite recent research advances, such as a new strain of wheat that resists destructive mildew, commercial planting of genetically modified food crops has stalled in China, the world's most populous nation and one with a fast-tightening food supply.

In 2009, the nation's Ministry of Agriculture issued a so-called safety certificate to two strains of insect-resistant rice, known as Bt rice, pioneered by Qifa Zhang, a scientist at Huazhong Agricultural University in Wuhan. The rice approval seemed to have hit a public nerve. Rumors spread on social media chat rooms of claimed health and environmental dangers of homegrown GMOs and of the nation's vast imports of GMO grains. (Military officials in one Chinese province even recently banned GMO-sourced cooking oil from troops' food supply.)

"We need the GMOs, but we face severe issues so far in China, meaning the public fears. This is a problem," says Dafang Huang, former director of the Institute of Biotechnology within the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences. Long-term food security trends are worrisome. China is home to 1.3 billion people. Its population is rising, its available arable land is slowly decreasing, and yield per acre has stayed essentially flat over the past decade.

Read the full, original article: [Chinese GMO research outpaces approvals](#)