

Will ‘genetically edited’ crops diffuse the opposition to GMOs?

Recent advances in precise editing of genomes now raise the possibility that fruit and other crops might be genetically improved without the need to introduce foreign genes, as in genetically modified organisms (GMOs), say researchers writing in the Cell Press publication *Trends in Biotechnology*.

The notion is that “genetically edited” fruits might be met with greater acceptance than GMOs. This could mean “super bananas” that produce more vitamin A and apples that don’t brown when cut, for example.

“The simple avoidance of introducing foreign genes makes genetically edited crops more ‘natural’ than transgenic crops obtained by inserting foreign genes,” said Chidananda Nagamangala Kanchiswamy of the Istituto Agrario San Michele in Italy in a [recent statement](#).

For instance, changes to the characteristics of fruit might be made via small genetic tweaks designed to increase or decrease the amounts of natural ingredients that their plant cells already make. Such genome editing has become possible due to the advent of new tools, such as CRISPR and TALEN, and also because of the extensive and growing knowledge of fruit genomes.

So far, editing tools have not been applied to the genetic modification of fruit crops. Most transgenic fruit crop plants have been developed using a plant bacterium to introduce foreign genes. The researchers say that genetically edited plants, modified through the insertion, deletion, or altering of existing genes of interest, might be deemed as non-genetically modified, depending on the interpretation of the EU commission and member state regulators.

Read full original article: [Looking forward to genetically edited fruit crops](#)