7 ways biotech crops fail in feeding the world

Many in the biotechnology industry seem to believe there's a simple solution to the global food crisis: genetically modified (GM or biotech) crops. Biotech multinationals have been in media blitz mode ever since the food crisis first made headlines, touting miracle crops that will purportedly increase yields, tolerate drought, and cure all manner of ills.

Not everyone is convinced. The UN and World Bank recently completed an unprecedentedly broad scientific assessment of world agriculture, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, which concluded that biotech crops have very little potential to alleviate poverty and hunger. This four-year effort, which engaged some 400 experts from multiple disciplines, originally included industry representatives. Just three months before the final report was released, however, agrichemical seed giants Monsanto, Syngenta and BASF pulled out of the process, miffed by the poor marks given their favorite technology. This withdrawal upset even the industry-friendly journal *Nature*, which chided the companies in an editorial entitled "Deserting the Hungry?"

Bill Freese with the activist NGO Center for Food Safety outlines seven reasons why he believes GMOs fall short of their promise.

1. They encourage large scale monocultures, tip power away from small scale producers, increasing poverty and hunger
2. The traits with the most promise have failed to materialize
3. The traits in use have led to increased herbicide use and resistance
4. The yield drag of GE crops cancels out much of their benefits
5. Private seed development by biotech companies crowds out investment in public breeding programs
6. Few seed choices, higher seed prices
7. Hi-tech resource intensive farming crowds out lo-tech, low income solutions

Read the full, original article: Why GM crops will not feed the world