

GMO breeding: Years of practice but still divisive

Proponents and critics of genetic modification (GM) have been arguing over the potential impact of genetically modified organisms (GMO) on health and the environment for more than a decade now.

Genetic engineering can manipulate the DNA of crops to switch off existing traits or add new ones in ways that were not possible before.

Proponents argue that genetic engineering has been at work long enough without reports of health or environmental risks. They say the process undergoes rigorous testing and is more precise and more sustainable.

Opponents say the biotech industry's safety tests are self-motivated and lack oversight. They argue that in addition to concerns over long-term health issues, the environmental impact of GM farming is already evident.

TECHtonics reached out to two experts from each side of the debate to get a glimpse of where some of these issues stand today: C.S. Prakash, Professor of Plant Molecular Genetics at Tuskegee University and [Ricardo Salvador](#), Director of the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#).

Biotech, argues Prakash, has “far more answers and far more ways to answer about the consequences of food developed from GM technology compared to conventional.”

With conventional breeding, he says “we absolutely had no idea what we were doing and what were the consequences of that. And yet we went ahead.”

Nevertheless, going conventional or GM is a matter of preference – and precision, says Prakash.

Salvador says, “the ... issue that concerns us the most is the environmental impact that results from the fact that this is a technology that enables and accelerates intensive agriculture, and particularly the kind of agriculture that generates a lot of environmental damage,” he said.

Read full, original article: [GM Foods Still Controversial After All These Years](#)