

Filipino farmers petition government to deny golden rice approval

Jon Sarmiento, a farmer in the Cavite province in southern Manila, plants a variety of fruits and vegetables, but his main crop, rice, is under threat. He claims that approval by the Philippine government of the genetically modified 'golden rice' that is fortified with beta-carotene, which the body converts into vitamin A, could ruin his livelihood.

Sarmiento, who is also the sustainable agriculture programme officer of PAKISAMA, a national movement of farmers' organisations, told IPS, "Genetically modified rice will not address the lack of vitamin A, as there are already many other sources of this nutrient. It will worsen hunger. It will also kill diversification and contaminate other crops."

Sarmiento aired his sentiments during a protest activity last week in front of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), an office under the Department of Agriculture, during which farmers unfurled a huge canvas depicting a three-dimensional illustration of the Banaue Rice Terraces in Ifugao province in the northern part of the Philippines.

The protesting farmers also delivered to the BPI an 'extraordinary opposition' petition against any extension, renewal or issuance of a new bio-safety permit for further field testing, feeding trials or commercialisation of golden rice.

Last week's public action received support from Greenpeace Southeast Asia and included farmers' groups, organic traders and consumers, mothers and environmentalists.

Read full, original article: [Filipino Farmers Protest Government Research on Genetically Modified Rice](#)