

Humans have been playing god with farm crops for 1000s of years, and that's okay

Some time ago I was listening to a BBC-podcast called '[the world history in 100 objects](#)'. The episode centered around the significance of corn for the Central American culture. Apparently, before certain [genetic mutations](#) took place, corn was quite inedible for humans. It took countless further mutations (both random and deliberate) from countless of generations of Central American farmers to develop the plant into its current variety. However, when the journalist/narrator asks a Mexican restaurant owner what he considers the biggest threat to his native culinary culture he mentions genetically modified organisms or [GMOs](#). "It is not our place to play god".

Even with my limited knowledge on plant breeding I couldn't understand this statement. The way I see it, humanity has been playing god by interfering with plant (and animal) genome for millennia. Moreover, the process has been done with much less precision than modern technologies would allow us to do. This logical inconsistency inspired me to look more deeply into the issue of food production, its [history](#) and its future.

Instead of fanciful rhetoric the obvious starting point for any meaningful discussion regarding GMOs is to see how they compare to 'traditional' products. The difference between traditional methods and genetic engineering is the fact that with the former you will end up having hundreds or thousands of other (often unwanted or unnoticed) mutations that also take place in the process.

To my surprise I found out that often the far more intrusive techniques require no such regulatory oversight GMOs do. If I had no prior knowledge of the issue or the debate, this arbitrary treatment would seem quite absurd – not to mention hypocritical. Indeed, the dichotomy between genetic engineering and "traditional" breeding methods would seem almost impossible.

Read full, original article: [Should we adopt GMOs?](#)