

Overwrought debate over GMOS diverts Africa from addressing food crisis

Say the words “green revolution,” and people take sides. ... As polarizing ideas go, though, the green revolution’s got nothing on genetically modified crops, and in Africa, as here, that topic is dominating the debate about food. And there, as here, GMOs are a proxy for the excesses and dangers of an industrialized food system.

In the United States, that means we’re having all the wrong debates. We’re arguing about whether genetically modified herbicide-tolerant crops have increased or decreased pesticide use, rather than trying to figure out how systems such as integrated pest management can help farmers grow food with fewer chemicals. We’re arguing over how evil Monsanto is, rather than asking how government can effectively regulate a system in which corporate, agricultural, consumer and environmental goals are often at odds. We’re wasting time, money and ever so much energy.

Take that proxy — [arguing about GMOs](#) instead of industrialized agriculture — to the developing world, and the stakes are much higher. Lives and livelihoods are on the line, and overwrought arguments about genetic modification will cost both.

If you think that denying those people tools because you’re afraid that’s how multinational corporations are going to cash in — by making farmers dependent on seeds and chemicals they can’t afford — ask yourself a couple of questions. Do you think African farmers are incapable of understanding how GMOs work and weighing the pros and cons? Do you think they don’t realize that hybrid or patented seeds have to be bought every year and make sense only if the yield improvement outweighs the increased cost?

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [The last thing Africa needs to be debating is GMOs](#)