

New genetic editing techniques on canola trying to bypass opposition to GMOs

[Cibus](#) is a San Diego-based biotech company that alters canola DNA to produce beneficial traits, but not through transgenics. They send a molecular messenger into the plant's DNA, conscripting the canola's own DNA-fixing enzymes into changing a gene. That messenger dissolves after its job is done, leaving no foreign genetic material in the finished crop.

Jim Radtke, vice president of product development, says the Cibus approach isn't genetic modification, it's genetic editing.

"Really, it creates mutations not unlike those you're going to find in nature," he said. "If you looked through million of canola plants, you'd find the same changes that we are making. We just do it in a controlled way, and a lot faster."

Farmers are already growing one strain of Cibus canola commercially. The company hopes to bring other gene-edited crops to market and appeal to growing demand for non-GMO ingredients.

"We all understand GMO to be transgenic," said Radtke. "And as such, we're not GMO."

[Maarten Chrispeels](#), a UC San Diego professor emeritus and an expert on GMOs, says there is no one right answer to the question of what a GMO is.

"A GMO is what you want a GMO to be, I guess," said Chrispeels. "There is actually no universally accepted scientific definition of a GMO."

Chrispeels says scientists often understand GMOs differently from the politicians legislating them; regulators have one definition of GMO while activists have another.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [San Diego Biotech Company: Don't Call Our Crop A GMO](#)