

Challenging myths that hold Europe back from using GMOs

It is now four decades since the first experiments with recombinant DNA that led to a brief voluntary moratorium. It is also about two decades since the first genetically modified plant was commercialised.

The precautionary measures taken at an early stage in these developments were justified by lack of knowledge about a new technology and our inability to predict its negative consequences for environment and society. In particular in Europe, this is the way biotechnology is often still discussed. We think it is time to dismiss three myths that are common in those discussions.

The first myth is that GMO is still a new technology about which we know very little. This is wrong because the technical processes used for moving genes in the laboratory are now fairly well understood, and they do not give rise to major worries in terms of risks.

Myth number two is that there are no different risks involved in GMO than in traditional breeding. GMO makes it possible to move genes across biological barriers that traditional breeders cannot cross, even from animals to plants. For obvious reasons, the effects of such modifications may be different from those of intra-species transfers, and they are often more difficult to predict.

The third myth is that all uses of GMO are extremely dangerous. Instead of considering all uses of GMO to imply a high risk for environment and society, major focus in the discussion should be on the specific traits of modified organisms and their possible effects, rather than the technologies used to modify those traits.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Busting the myths about GMOs in agriculture](#)