

GMO myths hold back advances in eco-conscious farming

Few scientific avenues are as controversial in the public mind as genetic modification of crops. Many scientists are allured by the potential to increase food production, reduce use of pesticides and, ultimately, save lives. Detractors regard GM food with suspicion and warn that scientists shouldn't play God with nature. We need reasoned discussion – something that these GM myths all too often blight.

Claim: GM research is all about big business

Much GM research is academic, humanitarian and free of intellectual-property issues. Golden rice is but one example. Up to 10 million children a year die of micronutrient deficiency in poor areas; because golden rice is genetically modified to have extra vitamin A. Sadly, it has been doggedly opposed by organisations such as Greenpeace. This ideological pig-headedness is even more puzzling when one considers that GM advances could not only save millions of lives but also spare our environment the ravages of intensive farming and pesticides.

Three years ago, in England, hundreds of protesters tried to destroy a field where genetically modified wheat was being tested by Rothamsted Research, an independent, nonprofit agricultural institution. Researchers there have worked to produce a wheat with a naturally occurring plant pheromone that repelled aphids. Were it successful, farmers would no longer have to use potentially hazardous insecticides. In spite of the potential, protesters vowed to destroy the experiment, just as they have vowed to destroy many other research crops.

This is just one of five common myths that circulate about GM food, too often shaping the tone of the conversation before it even begins. Yet with a world population set to hit nine billion by 2050 we cannot afford this blind reliance on dogma if we intend to feed the world without ruining the planet.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Why GM food could help us feed the world without ruining the planet](#)