

GMO gluten-free wheat could be savior for celiac sufferers, but anti-biotech campaigners block it

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

[Wheat](#) is one of the most important grains worldwide, but individuals with celiac disease become very ill if they consume this grain. The [only solution](#) for people with the disease is to follow a strict gluten-free diet for life which significantly increases spending on food because of the [higher price](#) of gluten-free products.

An alternative is to produce a variety of gluten-free wheat. But it is very difficult to produce a wheat variety without all the gliadin genes by conventional breeding techniques such as selection and hybridization.

To avoid this obstacle, a team of Spanish scientists led by Dr. Francisco Barro decided to develop a free-gluten wheat variety using the technology of [RNA interference](#) (RNAi) to silence or delete the genes that produce the problematic gliadins.

The team's [research](#) was published in 2011 and revealed that 4 of the 17 lines of GM wheat with low amounts of gliadins produced a reaction up to ~95% less toxic when compared to conventional wheat.

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Despite the opportunity presented by this GM crop to improve the quality of life of celiac patients, the problems arise at the stage of approval and commercialization. At this point I cannot fail to quote from blog [post](#) of [Jose Miguel Mulet](#), a Spanish plant scientist from CSIC and a leader in the hispanic science/biotechnology communication community.

How can it be that a technology created with Spanish public funds end up in the hands of a private American company? Because of the aberrant anti-GMO European law. No European or Spanish company is interested in commercially developing this wheat due to obstacles in the authorization process...The result: licensing rights have been acquired by the... Dow Agrosciences, given that the authorization process in the United States is much easier.

Read full, original post: [Gluten-free GM wheat can help celiac patients](#)