

## GMOs huge opportunity for Hawaiian economy, misunderstood by critics

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

There is tension on the island of Hawai'i regarding its 2013 ban on GMO crops. Many agricultural producers claim that Hawai'i County has no legal authority to enforce such a regulation. Having jumped on the opportunity to produce up to four crops a year, their presence in the state has stirred a debate over biotechnology and farming practices.

Despite their negative portrayal, these businesses have the potential to advance Hawai'i as a strong competitor in the burgeoning field of biotechnology. For this reason, it makes sense we embrace advances in agronomy and create an environment that encourages them.

According to a USDA study, agriculture is a big player on the islands: "33.3 percent of total direct annual contributions to Hawai'i's economy." Considering that these companies provide livelihood for hundreds of workers, we shouldn't snub them.

Farmers who support biotechnology are often accused of overusing chemical fertilizers and pesticides. According to [Ania Wiczorek](#), of the University of Hawaii, Manoa, such fears reflect a misunderstanding of agricultural technology.

"When genetic engineering results in reduced pesticide dependence, we have less pesticide residues on foods, we reduce pesticide leaching into groundwater, and we minimize farm worker exposure to hazardous products." According to Wiczorek and other experts, claims that seed companies are responsible for making people sick are speculations lacking hard evidence.

Unfortunately, many on the anti-GMO side refuse to consider the facts of the debate and resort to heckling. When Kaua'i mayor Bernard Carvalho explained why he vetoed Disclosure Pesticide Bill 24 in November 2013, he was [heckled and rudely interrupted](#) by an angry mob.

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