

Europe's "coalition of the ignorant" opposes GMOs, hurt poorer countries

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

Call it the "Coalition of the Ignorant." By the first week of October, 17 European countries had used new European Union rules to announce bans on the cultivation of [genetically modified crops](#).

These prohibitions expose the worrying reality of how far Europe has gone in setting itself against modern science. The historical irony is that Europe once led in biotech. Meanwhile, hypocrisy rules: Europe imports over 30 million tons per year of animal feeds, most genetically modified, for its livestock industry.

Shielded from the winds of change behind a \$50 billion wall of subsidies, farmers in Europe can afford to lose their competitive edge.

Following Europe's lead, no country in sub-Saharan Africa except South Africa currently permits the cultivation of G.M.O. food crops. Yet from drought-tolerant maize to virus-resistant cassava, biotech traits are being developed that could quickly improve the livelihoods of poorer African farmers.

I have spent time with malnourished children in Tanzania who were going hungry because cassava crops were wiped out by brown-streak disease. In neighboring Uganda I had visited trial plots of GM cassava resistant to the virus. The faces of the hungry children come to mind every time I hear European politicians boast about their country's G.M.O. ban and demand that the rest of the world follow suit — as Scotland's minister did in August.

We are witnessing a historic injustice perpetrated by the well fed on the food insecure. Europe's stance, if taken up internationally, risks marginalizing a critical technology that we need if humanity is to feed itself sustainably. I can only hope that Europe's policy makers come to their senses before it is too late.

Read full, original post: [With G.M.O. Policies, Europe Turns Against Science](#)