

Golden Rice opens door for other vitamin enhanced GMO crops, such as cassava

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

Bangladesh announced last month that it was moving ahead with field trials of Golden Rice, which in itself represents a big step forward in fighting vitamin-A deficiency, a condition that kills hundreds of thousands globally each year. But perhaps the biggest impact of that decision is that it paves the way for production of other Genetically Modified Organisms, such as an enhanced cassava root crop in Africa.

Despite its life-saving potential, Golden Rice has faced an onerous battle for both public and political support. This struggle, however, was never just about the rice itself; it was about gaining acceptance for GM crops in general. In particular, those created not to enhance profit margins, but instead to better society.

Golden Rice was the trailblazing crop, but others were always destined to follow particularly because they could follow such a successful formula. Pick a nutrient deficiency, then find a food that's already consumed in high numbers by an affected population. For Golden Rice that meant Asia, where vitamin-A deficiency affects as many as 90 percent of its population — and where rice is a cultural staple.

Now, scientists, [publishing](#) in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*, announced they have genetically engineered cassava roots and leaves to produce higher levels of vitamin B6. The cassava plant is a staple crop of many African cultures affected by a significant B6 deficiency.

Vitamin B6 is involved in cognitive development, immune function and sugar metabolism. Deficiency of this vitamin is associated with anemia, EEG abnormalities, glossitis (swollen tongue), depression, cognitive impairment and weakened immune function.

**Read full, original post:** Cassava Crop Poised to Be Next GM Success