

Intrexon plays long game, corners market on synthetic biology companies

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You've probably never heard of Intrexon, but certainly seen headlines about the controversial companies it's recently acquired. There's Oxitec, which wants to release [GM mosquitoes](#) to fight dengue fever. AquaBounty, whose GM salmon has been stuck in FDA approval for years. Okanagan Specialty Fruits, which grows GM apples that don't turn brown.

At a time of when public opinion against GMOs has gathered enough momentum to get GMO-labeling laws on the ballot and Chipotle to tout itself as GMO free, those are bold business moves.

Intrexon is a synthetic biology company that gets more coverage in the financial press than science press. Intrexon CEO Randal J. Kirk's interest in synthetic biology is clearly an economically driven one.

Kirk's reputation as a businessman is what makes acquisitions like AquaBounty with its GM salmon so interesting. [Sixty-five percent of Americans](#) have said they won't touch GM fish; mainstream supermarkets said they won't carry it. The FDA has yet to formally approve the fish. By buying a majority stake in the company, Intrexon likely kept it from collapse.

Why make such a risky bet? "Why we can afford to be patient is perhaps the better question," answered Kirk. Intrexon can afford to play the long game because it has its fingers in nearly every synthetic biology pot.

Most of Intrexon's revenue, though, comes from livestock breeding genetics—the kind that's already legal. Kirk is pragmatic about fears over GMOs. "If it delivers tangible benefit to consumer, then most of the so-called sociopolitical issues go away," he says. With synthetic biology, Intrexon could change the world; it could also make a lot of money.

Read full, original post: [Intrexon's Billionaire CEO Is Betting on the Most Controversial GMOs](#)