

GMOs critical for Australia to expand agri-food exports

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

If Australia wants to make serious money from agriculture it needs to abandon new foreign investment controls on farmland, wake up to the importance of genetically modified (GM) crops and develop an aggressive value-adding mindset.

These recommendations (and many more) aimed at cultivating investment in the agri-food sector and lifting farming's export potential are headlining a Business Council of Australia (BCA) report championing how the sector should cash in on huge market growth on our doorstep.

Despite Australia's respected agricultural credentials, the agri-food sector currently represents just four per cent of the nation's GDP, with many food manufacturers moving offshore rather than expanding in recent years.

The BCA warns major competitors including the US, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand are already taking decisive action to realise the opportunities emerging, particularly in Asia.

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The BCA's Building Australia's Comparative Advantages Agrifood study highlighted the role GM foods would play in improving nutritional quality in developing markets and the productivity of crops in response to climate and pest challenges.

"Government needs to build consumer understanding and cultivate consensus across the supply chain, providing factual evidence about GM foods to address community concerns and relevant regulatory constraints," the report said.

"Every legitimate scientific and regulatory body that has examined the evidence (including the World Health Organisation and the European Commission) has concluded the approved GM crops are as safe as their conventional counterparts."

Read full, original post: Ag needs 'value-add' mindset: BCA