

## Philippine Supreme Court blocks field testing of GMO Bt eggplant

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The Supreme Court [Philippines] has permanently stopped the government's field testing of Bt along [eggplant] and declared the Department of Agriculture Administrative Order No. 8 on such tests null and void.

The high tribunal, according to a resolution read by SC spokesman Theodore Te, dismissed several petitions in support of field testing for genetically modified, pest-resistant *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) talong (eggplant).

According to the SC, AO No. 8 failed to meet the minimum requirements for safety set in Executive Order No. 514 which established the National Biosafety Framework.

The SC said the government and the companies involved made "no real effort to operationalize the principles of the NBF in the conduct of field testing of Bt talong." . . .

In the same ruling, the Supreme Court also temporarily stopped the government from accepting applications for field testing, propagating, and importing genetically modified organisms (GMOs). . .

The court said that after a lengthy review of scientific literature, it has concluded that "in sum, current scientific research indicates that the biotech industry has not sufficiently addressed the uncertainties over the safety of GMO foods and crops."

. . .

The case was initiated by a group of scientists, farmers, and other concerned individuals who earlier asked the Supreme Court to stop the government from introducing genetically engineered eggplants to Philippine soil, citing health and environmental hazards.

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