

USDA quietly opens door to CRISPR crops, starting new era of agricultural biotechnology

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

USDA quietly opened the door on a brave new era of genetic engineering in agriculture this spring.

. . . (APHIS) informed [DuPont Pioneer] that it would not be regulating a Pioneer corn hybrid produced by a popular new gene-editing technique called CRISPR-Cas9.

. . . .

Pioneer's new CRISPR-Cas waxy corn hybrid is missing a gene known as Wx1. Without the gene, corn plants produce a large amount of amylopectin. . .

This specialty grain is milled into starch, which is used in a variety of processed foods, adhesives and high-gloss paper. . .

. . . .

Previously, breeders have had to find plants that have a naturally occurring mutation that makes Wx1 non-functional. . . . These waxy corn hybrids tend to yield lower than elite corn hybrids . . .

CRISPR-Cas9 allowed Pioneer scientists to pick high-yielding corn hybrids . . . and simply snip out Wx1. . .

. . . .

. . . [T]he production of a market-ready CRISPR-Cas waxy corn hybrid took less than five years — compared to a decade or more under traditional breeding. . .

. . . .

USDA declined to regulate CRISPR-Cas waxy corn because no genetic material from a separate organism was inserted into the plant genome. . .

. . . .

Under this logic, CRISPR-Cas9 is just an accelerated breeding technique . . .

Read full, original post: [Brave New Crops](#)