CRISPR crops could make agriculture more sustainable if public accepts them

Hopes are high for CRISPR, an emerging genetic technology that has been called “ground-breaking”, “jaw-dropping” and a potential boon for sustainable agriculture.

. . . .

CRISPR is still in the experimental stage…DuPont… is working on CRISPR-edited corn and wheat that will need less water and produce higher yields, reckons that full exploitation is five to ten years away.

Other applications undergoing testing include “beefier” cattle, wheat that resists fungal disease and virus-immune pigs.

But the main benefit of CRISPR might be that CRISPR-edited crops may be viewed less controversially than genetically modified organisms…

A key point is that whereas GM involves the introduction of genes from other species into plants and animals, CRISPR is a way of editing what is already there for maximum benefit.

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“Hopefully we learned a few things from the genetic engineering PR debacle,” and CRISPR could prove a “terrific tool for sustainable agriculture,” [Neal Stewart, a professor of plant sciences at the University of Tennessee] says.

…To ensure acceptance, “there needs to be transparency in development of the products as well as the risks and benefits in deploying new CRISPR-edited varieties,” Stewart says.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: CRISPR crops are coming

[Editor’s Note: Genetic Literacy Project’s Executive Director, Jon Entine, will be speaking at Innovation Forum’s “Innovation for Sustainable Agriculture” conference in Washington D.C., Nov. 17-18. For more information visit the website.]