

Consumer opposition stalls GM feed crops that could revolutionize Australia's dairy industry

The [Australian] dairy industry's greatest innovations in a generation — genetically modified high-energy ryegrass and virus-resistant clover — have still not been released after almost 20 years of research.

Despite promises they would lift milk production by 25 percent, and earn farmers up to \$750 a hectare extra, the developed pastures have not been commercialized amid continuing consumer opposition to GM foods. In 1998, local field trials proved the value of GM clover, showing it maintained resistance to the alfalfa mosaic virus, while conventional cultivars suffered losses of up to 60 percent.

High-energy ryegrass was developed in 2003 ... saying at the time it should be available within five years and would enable cows to produce up to 25 percent more milk from the same amount of fodder.

...

[Field trials] showed GM ryegrass produced an extra megajoule of metabolisable energy per kilogram of dry matter and could boost dairy farm productivity by \$450-\$750 a hectare.

...

"When gene technology is more broadly accepted in the marketplace, then there's a market for (GM) white clover," [said DairyBio co-director David Nation.]

The long delay in getting GM pastures into dairy and other livestock producers' paddocks seems to be based on dairy processor resistance amid fears of a consumer backlash.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: GM ryegrass: Consumer opposition stalls next-gen fodder release