

GMO stigma: The challenge of growing virus-resistant papaya in Hawaii

[Michael] Kamiya is a strong supporter of agricultural technology, which he credits for saving his family's farm. He has childhood memories of his father chopping down papaya trees in a desperate quest to prevent the spread of the deadly ringspot virus, which nearly wiped out the industry in Hawaii. But with the development of a transgenic (GMO) papaya resistant to the virus, the crop can be successfully cultivated throughout the Islands.

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Though biotechnology has made his farm viable, it created other hardships. "It is very challenging growing GMO papayas in Hawaii," Kamiya said. "There's a lot of stigmatism around GMO crops or GMO technology." He's attended public meetings where residents denounced him for being a GMO farmer and spraying pesticides, and told him to get out of their community — the same community where he was born and raised.

"Coming out of a meeting like that is a really, really hard thing to swallow," he said. "But in the end you know that you're running a business, you're employing people, you're supplying food that people love to eat. You know inside that you're doing something right, so it's worth the fight."

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Fighting the stigma of growing GMOs](#)