

Biotech advocates hope Trump tackles regulatory overreach on GMO crops

The agricultural biotech sector is cheering President Donald Trump's assault on regulatory overreach, seeing its best shot in years to streamline 30-year-old rules governing approval of genetically engineered crops.

Agri-tech companies want Trump's USDA to revamp rules that they say block innovation and are hopelessly antiquated. Doing so, they say, would enable farmers to produce more healthful and sustainable crops — everything from more flavorful tomatoes to heat-resistant lettuce and gluten-free wheat.

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Currently, genetically engineered crop developers must go through an onerous and often yearslong regulatory process, even for changes that might have happened in nature and pose no known risks to consumer health or other crops. It takes 11 years on average and about \$136 million to get government signoff for a GE plant, according to a 2011 CropLife International [study](#) — far too expensive for any but the biggest players.

But updating the regulations is likely to be difficult. Many consumers and environmental groups are still leery of genetically modified foods. Some seek strict regulation of even the smallest changes to protect organic crops from potential contamination, and to ensure that Americans know what they are eating — an argument that convinced Congress to impose a federal standard for disclosing GMO ingredients in food last year.

Read full, original post: Trump's opportunity to change America's fruits and vegetables (behind paywall)