

Beyond GMOs: Gene editing's potential to transform food and farming depends on public acceptance

[The following is part of a letter from the editor of MIT Technology Review, David Rotman.]

Decades of fretting over the safety and virtue of genetically modified organisms have led to a perverse outcome. Plant scientists in academia and startup companies have largely shied away from creating new GM crop varieties because it takes, on average, more than a hundred million dollars and over a decade to get such a plant approved by regulators in the United States, and also because the idea of GMO food has elicited public outrage. As a result, a few large agricultural and chemical producers like Monsanto—or MonSatan, if you prefer—dominate the GM industry, making a killing off herbicide- and insect-resistant corn and soybeans.

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That stunts progress in plant breeding just as climate change and population growth are putting growing pressure on agriculture (see [“Why We Will Need Genetically Modified Foods”](#)).

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New gene-editing tools, either CRISPR or the slightly older TALEN, don't insert a foreign gene into the plant to create a new trait (as typically happens with conventional GMOs) but, rather, tweak the plant's existing DNA. The engineered crops thus sidestep the lengthy regulatory process and could avoid the stigmas surrounding GMOs entirely.

Read full, original post: [Gene Editing Could Rewrite the GMO Debate](#)