

Why approved Chinese-developed GMO rice that boosts yields, reduces pesticide use not available to country's farmers, consumers

In 2009, two insect-resistant genetically modified rice lines (Huahui-1 and Bt-Shanyou -63) were granted biosafety certificates by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) in China after nearly 10 years of rigorous and strict biosafety assessments. Most farmers welcomed the planting of the transgenic rice due to their potential to reduce pesticide spraying by 50-60%, increase yield by 60-65% and improve the health of farmers. [However,] these two lines have yet [to be] commercialized ... largely because of low public acceptance. ... This has created a dilemma. On the one hand, the government has invested substantial amounts of funding in GM crop development, but on the other hand, the end users or consumers are not prepared to accept GM products due to safety reasons.

Public worries still exist simply because the protocols of the technology remains too technical to be understood. Consumers often do not have access to appropriate channels providing science-based and easy-to-understand information. Consequently, they are misled by activists from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which utilizes the social media reports to publicize the misconception of GM crops. The outreach of scientists in educating the public with essential knowledge of transgenic biotechnology, its benefits derived and biosafety issues is crucially needed in order to bring notable impact to the public's acceptance of GM crops.

Read full, original post: Producing Transgenic Rice with Improved Traits and Yield — How Far Have We Come?