

CRISPR gene editing could boost crop yields and nutrition, but public acceptance remains wild card

The process of producing better food, protecting the environment and improving animal health is advancing at a seemingly breakneck pace.

These advancements are driven in part by new scientific discoveries, genetic research, data science, enhanced computational power and the availability of new systems for precision breeding like CRISPR....

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[T]he science is moving so rapidly that some are wondering if producers, consumers and regulators will ultimately be able to understand and embrace the changes.

As history demonstrates, new advancements in breeding have almost always been controversial — even though safety or environmental risks have not been proven.

It's important to always remember that, "science and innovation always outruns law and policy. These ethical and moral questions are not new," said Bill Even, CEO of the National Pork Board who also owns a farm in South Dakota. "They arise every time a new technology emerges."

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One important thing to keep in mind: These new gene-editing tools are much different than genetically modified organisms or GMOs, that activist groups have given such a bad rap.

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With gene editing, no genes from foreign species are introduced.

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Nevertheless, gene editing will have to jump huge policy hurdles — both domestically and internationally — before results of such plant and animal breeding show up on farms, in fields and in food stores.

Read full, original post: [New techniques can boost yields, improve animal welfare. But are you ready?](#)