

Bangladeshi farmers may be able to start growing GMO blight-resistant potatoes this year

Researchers from the U.S., Indonesia and Bangladesh are embracing genetic engineering in hopes of increasing food security.

The team is creating a genetically-engineered potato to fight the late blight disease that caused the 19th-century Irish potato famine. The disease remains an issue for farmers worldwide, especially in Bangladesh, where many struggle with hunger.

“Late blight is the number one constraint for potato production, and Bangladesh has a perfect environment for this disease,” said Jim Bradeen, co-director of the [University of Minnesota’s] Stakman-Borlaug Center and a scientific advisor for the project.

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The researchers are working to implement durable disease resistance in potatoes using three disease-resistant genes, Bradeen said. Since the pathogen that causes late blight disease can evolve and become resistant to the genes designed to protect the crop, researchers hope using three genes will be an adequate defense.

They hope to introduce the potato in Bangladesh in the next six months to a year, Bradeen said.

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Bangladesh has already approved one genetically-modified organism (GMO) to improve crop performance: a genetically-engineered, insect-resistant eggplant.

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While GMOs are highly debated in the U.S. and Europe, Bangladesh has embraced GMO technology, Bradeen said. However, the GMOs must meet many government regulations, which can be difficult for crop developers.

Read full, original post: [Researchers turning to GMOs to solve food insecurity](#)