Viewpoint: Anti-GMO opposition to CRISPR gene editing driven by skepticism of corporations, capitalism

*The Des Moines Register* recently reported on research … which unveiled Russian funding for and promotion of articles that question the safety of GMOs in farming.

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It is important because this technology could bring important solutions to agricultural problems in our crops — like a genetically modified citrus tree resistant to HLB or a tomato plant immune to bacterial spot. Those already are in development by scientists here in Florida.

But, what is more concerning is anti-GMO forces are turning their attention to new breeding techniques and scientific breakthroughs. One of those technologies is CRISPR, a gene-editing technique that takes away the need to introduce “foreign” DNA into a species like in GMOs. It has huge potential in human medicine and plant breeding. I am not surprised to hear that anti-GMO campaigners are turning their attention toward these new technologies. I believe it is driven more by anti-corporate and anti-capitalist sentiments than anything to do with safety and the environment.

It seems that if we listened to the anti-GMO arguments, we would freeze plant breeding and innovation in time and stifle advancements in productivity and other positive traits. Of course, we must approach CRISPR ethically, because it is an extremely powerful tool. But, it would be a shame to deny this to agriculture and a world of hungry people it can benefit.

*Read full, original post: Watch out for Anti-GMO Fake-out*