

Fear of GMOs scares China's consumers, slows agricultural innovation

In the midst of a trade war with the United States, Chinese President Xi Jinping keeps repeating that China is capable of achieving technological supremacy alone. There is, however, one area where the country does not seem eager to go beyond America: that of genetically modified crops. Formerly a pioneer in this field, China is today lagging because of the hostility of its population. The use of GMOs is restricted to non-food crops. After years of hesitation, the five-year plan published in 2016 has predicted the marketing of certain transgenic maize and soybean varieties by the end of the decade.

But public opinion is very reluctant. According to the journal *Nature*, 45% of Chinese are opposed to GMOs. Nearly one in seven believes that GMO technology is “*a bioterrorism targeting China*.” With the fear that foreigners, especially Americans, will benefit from their mastery of this technology to control Chinese food resources.

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According to James Chen, head of Beijing firm Origin Agritech, hostility from public opinion could hamper [the company's] plans “*When we saw the government's renewed interest in GMOs, we thought we would win the jackpot*,” he says. But reluctance remains.

[Editor's note: This article was originally published in French. This English summary was prepared with Google Translate and edited for clarity.]

Read full, original article: [Food: why China backs on GMO production](#)