

Viewpoint: Arguments against crop gene editing rely on ‘cherry-picking half-truths’

Critics of the use of advanced biotechnologies in the agri-food sector (“New Breeding Techniques,” comprising CRISPR) demand a strict regulation of any such method, even more severe than rules applied to so-called “Genetically Modified Organisms” But their position is unwarranted, since it relies on faulty arguments.

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The antagonists maintain that NBTs are inherently risky: this belief is exactly the opposite of a long-standing, overwhelming scientific consensus. NBTs involve unpredictable effects, but it is the same for the results of any other technique. The critics wrongly equate “unintended” with “harmful” and misunderstand two meanings of “risk:” the “risk” of not achieving satisfactory results does not automatically translate into health or environment “risks.”

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These opponents place an exclusive, almost obsessive emphasis on (misunderstood) risks and dangers: such a totally negative attitude reveals a biased, unescapable anti-biotechnological mindset, which seems to influence the theoretical misapprehension of the matter.

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One may wonder why anti-biotech groups present such fallacious arguments In our opinion, it is not (mostly) a matter of wrong-headed reasoning, but biases are passed off as scientifically grounded arguments in the pursuit of pushing a political agenda: science has a great appeal to the public and to decision-makers, but it is difficult for non-specialists to separate the wheat from the chaff. Cherry-picking half-truths or developing scientific-sounding pseudo-arguments and peddling them as sound evidence – or as indications of “risk” – is a winning strategy

Read full, original article: [Scientific mistakes from the agri-food biotech critics](#)