

Public opposition to promising CRISPR gene-editing technology is 'tragic,' biotech experts say

In one version of the future, beef and dairy animals are disease-free, fruits and vegetables are resistant to viruses, potatoes taste better and last longer, and wheat has no gluten or allergenic properties.

That future is possible, scientists say. Researchers already have the ability to remove, replace and change genes that could immediately increase productivity and improve the health of plants and animals, according to Steve Strauss, a professor and researcher at Oregon State University. Strauss and a task force of six other scientists have written a scientific paper that suggests gene editing, together with other genetic technologies, can help to feed the world sustainably.

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"There are compelling values that can be provided by this technology for the poor in the developing world, and it can clearly improve food quality and value for all consumers. Social obstacles are taking away critical tools," he said. "People should be open to this but the campaigns surrounding GMOs and related technologies have created a hostile environment for adoption. It's tragic, in my opinion."

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Gene-edited organisms can also pass on traits to non-edited relatives, the same as agricultural varieties traditionally bred. Therein is one public relations problem: There is a fear that controlling gene-edited plants or animals may be difficult.

Read full, original article: [Future of gene editing in limbo](#)