

Food safety officials reject Golden Rice-cancer link as Philippines inches toward commercializing the GMO crop

GOLDEN RICE, developed by biotechnologists to address Vitamin A deficiency, is still in the process of completing field trials before it applies for permission to be commercially propagated, officials said, amid the risk that it could get caught up in a broader debate about the safety of genetically-modified foods.

The Department of Agriculture's Biotechnology Program Office (BPO) said the typical testing regime will take two years.

"We need to validate the variety's performance in various locations and seasons, to determine its stability," BPO Director Dionisio G. Alvindia told reporters on [November 11] ..."

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The Stop Golden Rice Network Philippines (SGRNP), a group of 30 organizations and individuals, cited the risks from the lack of a long-term understanding of how the variety performs.

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"The Indian government research shows that 84% of the beta-carotene can be lost from Golden Rice after six months, unless it has been vacuum-packed and refrigerated" [The network also said] degraded beta-carotene is a cancer risk.

Mr. Alvindia said that these claims are not true and assured that Golden Rice is safe for humans. "This technology will not be released to the public without safeguards. Their claims are not true" he said.

Read full, original article: [Golden Rice undergoing trials in Isabela, Nueva Ecija](#)