

## Viewpoint: Proposed Philippines biotech authority could streamline GMO crop approvals, help farmers battle hunger

According to the biotech timeline prepared by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), the modern biotechnology era began in 1973 when scientists Herbert Boyer and Stanley Cohen successfully spliced a gene from one organism and moved it into another.

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More genetically modified crops were developed in the 1990s, but it took a while for these crops to reach the Philippines. The country started cultivating GM corn—the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) maize—in 2003.

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Filipino farmers have yet to tap other GM crops nearly 16 years after Bt corn was first approved for commercialization. AAMBIS-OWA Rep. Sharon Garin said “regulatory complications” are hampering the commercial release of biotechnology products. Garin refiled House Bill 3372, a measure she authored, which calls for the establishment of the Biotechnology Authority of the Philippines [BioAP].

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If approved, it is expected to expedite the regulatory decision-making process in biotechnology. Garin said the current regulatory regime is based on outdated knowledge .... and must be revised.

In view of the threat posed by climate change and shrinking farm areas to food production, we call on Congress to approve this measure. Local growers must be allowed to gain access to high-yielding varieties that will allow them to feed the country ....

**Read full, original article:** [Biotechnology is key to PHL food security](#)