

More science education may not quell consumer fear of GMO, gene-edited crops, Japanese study suggests

A team of researchers [in Japan] [conducted a survey](#) to explore the opinions and attitudes of both Japanese experts and the general public on gene editing versus other breeding techniques in Japan.

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The study utilized a web-based survey completed by 3,197 volunteers. The volunteers consisted of lay public members and scientists that did and did not possess expertise in molecular biology.

[T]hose who had expert knowledge in molecular biology believed that emerging technologies such as genetic engineering and editing offer low risk and higher benefits for food science. In contrast, the lay public believed such technologies offered the highest risk and lowest benefit.

When assessing the opinion of experts from other disciplines outside of molecular biology, [the] team found that these individuals possessed similar attitudes to the lay public when considering the risks of emerging technologies, but also thought there was value to their adoption.

Interestingly, the lay participants perceived gene-editing crops to be more beneficial and valuable compared to other genetically modified crops.

Kato-Nitta [a research scientist in Toyko and lead study author] comments, “.... In the survey, the experts in other fields perceived even more risk in gene editing than genetic modification in terms of ‘Possibility of misusing this technology’.”

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