

## Transgenic GMOs will remain banned in Italy, agriculture minister says, but cisgenic gene editing could help sustain nation's crop diversity

Italy's agricultural minister Teresa Bellanova has expressed an interest in developing sustainable biotechnology, in the light of a milestone agreement on next-gen biotech between farmers' organization Coldiretti and the Italian Society of Agricultural Genetics (SIGA).



Italian Minister of Agriculture Teresa Bellanova

“Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are the past and their cultivation is and will remain banned in Italy,” she [said], adding that Italy is more interested in focusing on sustainable biotechnologies such as cisgenesis and genome editing. Coldiretti, a leading organization of farmers representing more than one and a half million members in Italy, will sign a cooperation agreement with SIGA, opening up an entirely new field for the application of biotech in Italy's farming

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According to Coldiretti's President Ettore Prandini, these are techniques that do not involve the use of DNA foreign to the plant ....

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Regarding vine, for instance, Italy is the country with the greatest heritage of genetic diversity, explained Mario Pezzotti, member of Siga and professor of plant genetics in Verona. “The conservation and use of this biodiversity is essential, but so is giving traditional grape varieties the genetic characteristics to counteract the attack of pathogens and [climate change],” he said.

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