

Viewpoint: If Europe wants to be ‘carbon neutral,’ it needs to embrace biotechnology—GMO and CRISPR crops included

“A revolution is taking place in the knowledge base for life sciences and biotechnology, opening up new applications in healthcare, agriculture, and environmental protection.” Political awareness of this potential dates back to 2001, when the European Commission recognized life sciences and biotech through the adoption of its life science and biotechnology strategy.

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With the European Green Deal, the new European Commission has set out an ambitious roadmap towards a climate neutral continent in 2050. With that, Europe strives to become a global frontrunner and lead the way in tackling the climate crisis. Taking the potential of biotechnology and life sciences in benefiting people and planet, a renewed focus and impetus on life sciences and biotechnology are all the more necessary. Regaining leadership in the sector should be a fundamental priority for the EU.

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In agriculture, biotechnology offers sustainable food solutions through applying newest technologies. Biotechnology, (including genetic modification of crops), has increased farmers’ yields and incomes while reducing CO2 emissions, and the need for farmer inputs. Meanwhile, a science-based, risk-proportionate and non-discriminatory regulatory framework that allows for gene editing in crops could pave the way for products which offer health and consumer benefits ..

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