

## 25 years of GM crops: Biotechnology a blessing to many farmers, but not without costs

Brent Rendel, who started farming in the early 1990s, easily remembers how magical Roundup Ready crops seemed and the awe of seeing weed control shift from requiring three passes across a field with chemicals and tillage, endless scouting and multiple employees, down to as little as a single application once a year by one employee.

“It made things so much easier,” he recalls. “And, as with any new technology, if it gives you an ‘easy button’ for farming, farmers will push that baby hard!”

Brent’s nephew, Zack, who joined the family in farming in the early 2000s and branched out to his own farm in 2018, has grown up in a world where that easy button is long defunct.

“Zack has never farmed when glyphosate was completely effective,” Brent explains. In fact, the younger Rendel oversaw a suite of herbicide-tolerant traits on his farm last year, including 2,4-D-tolerant, dicamba-tolerant and glyphosate-tolerant technologies, as well as conventional soybeans.

Is he any better off now than past generations? It’s a hard question to answer.

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[A]s we enter a new decade, with new biotech tools such as gene editing on the cusp of transforming agriculture once again, the industry is faced with a growing number of consumers who are pushing back against technologies they don’t trust.

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