Video: Why does genetic modification have such a bad reputation? A conversation with Bayer GMO scientist Larry Gilbertson

Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats.

Otherwise known as CRISPR, it is a term many people know is associated with genetic engineering — particularly of food. But, what exactly is genetic engineering?

The science of adjusting the genetic makeup of plants has been in process for thousands of years. From the time humans transitioned from hunter-gatherers to farmers, we've been tinkering with food. This plant has those characteristics and if we wed them to this one, will it grow better in this environment? Will it taste better? Will it be drought-resistant? Will it be disease tolerant? And so on.

By the middle of the last century, scientists were rapidly moving toward sequencing the genomes of everything, including people. Genetics now play a vitally important role in innovations in medicine, trees, food, etc.

Somewhere along the way, genetic engineering of food got a bad rap and, now, many people are openly campaigning against bioengineering of plants.

I wanted to ask someone who actually does this type of work, what they do, why they do it, and can we trust them and the foods they produce. Larry Gilbertson of Bayer Crop Sciences joined a Conversation That Matters about innovations in plant biotechnology.

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