

Yearning for self-reliance and wary of imports, China edges closer to bucking wary public and embracing GMOs

Although GMOs have gained widespread acceptance elsewhere in recent years, Chinese consumers remain deeply opposed to them, and the government has delayed approvals of such crops for decades to avoid a backlash. That may be about to change. Earlier this month, the agriculture ministry [laid the groundwork](#) for growing genetically modified soybeans, and grains such as rice and corn, on Chinese soil for the first time. The question is whether the public will trust the government enough to accept such a revolution.

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Wary of this resistance, Chinese officials have only approved the commercial cultivation of genetically modified [cotton and papaya](#). Other crops remain in the lab or are exported for cultivation. One result is that China has only become more dependent on foreign GMOs, which are permitted for import so long as they're [processed](#) into products [like animal feed](#) to support China's surging demand for pork and other proteins.

That dependence has worried Chinese leaders for [at least a decade](#)....Tellingly, Chinese officials and media have recently [referred](#) to GM seeds as the "new semiconductors" — and warned that China is vulnerable without the ability to cultivate its own.

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