

Ukraine crisis prompts anti-GMO German farmers to consider embracing CRISPR gene edited crops

[Joachim Rukwied, President of the German Farmers' Association:] The yields in organic farming on the same area are roughly a third lower than in conventional farming. Organic cultivation is therefore significantly more land-intensive than conventional agriculture. Around 11 percent of the agricultural area in Germany is currently farmed organically. Increasing the share to 30 percent is therefore an ambitious goal. Theoretically, we would also need more agricultural land for this.

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The supply gap could also be filled in other ways than just with imports. In other countries, such problems have been encountered with the use of genetically modified seeds. Couldn't we use the space more efficiently with that?

We are clearly against the cultivation of genetically modified seeds. One possibility would be modern plant breeding methods such as Crispr/Cas. The plant itself is modified in a targeted manner so that it requires less fertilizer, for example.

Why is one genetic engineering good and the other bad?

Many people in Germany reject conventional genetic engineering in the food sector. We too have been opposed to this for many years. Like many scientists, we see a difference in the new breeding techniques compared to classic genetic engineering.

[Editor's note: This article was originally published in German and has been translated and edited for clarity.]

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