

Salt-proof, drought-tolerant wheat developed in Egypt — but GMO ban remains in place

The Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority, headed by Dr. Amr El-Hajj, announced that the agricultural research scientists in the authority have started harvesting the production of new strain of genetically-modified wheat at the authority's site in Inshas city, Bilbeis, Sharqia Governorate.

This strain has high-productivity with distinct characteristics such as being resistant to cultivation in saline lands, and water shortage, the authority said in a statement on Friday.

The rate of production exceeds 4 tons per acre, with an increase of almost a ton over the currently cultivated Egyptian varieties, the statement said, adding that this variety cultivation takes only 140 days, the statement continued.

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[The chairman of the Agriculture and Irrigation committee Hesham El Hossary] said in media comments that the crisis of the Coronavirus pandemic and the political international situation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict have pushed the state to consider planting the GM products.

Egypt prohibits importing and planting GMO seeds, but allows imports of GM-produced soybeans and maize that have been approved from the country of origin, especially from the United States.

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