

Viewpoint: ‘A crucial turning point’ — Italian researcher says CRISPR gene editing of seeds is crucial to prevent crop diseases

Italian agriculture could be close to a turning point, thanks to genetic engineering. This would make fruit and vegetables more resistant to drought or parasites, saving our insecticide and fungicide campaigns. After the green light in the joint Agriculture and Environment commissions of the Senate for the amendment to the Drought Decree, which made it possible to experiment in the open field of assisted evolution techniques in agriculture... a new opportunity is making its way.

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“To date,” highlights the CNR biotechnologist [Roberto Defez], “Italy imports 10 thousand tons of genetically modified soybeans every day, with an estimated cost of around 2.5 billion euros a year. This means that it is not the fears towards the future to stop innovation: it’s just a matter of understanding if we want to face a problem with scientific maturity, the survival of our crops to climate change and the aggression of pathogens, or miss the umpteenth train, due to a nostalgia for the past and a lack of faith in research”.

[Editor’s note: This article has been translated from Italian and edited for clarity.]

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)