

Hunger and malnutrition are soaring in Africa. There is a helpful solution: GM crops

Hunger and undernourishment are two elements of food insecurity that have plagued Africa for years. And the menace is growing.

In 2022, the African region accounted for the highest level of hunger as described by [Global Hunger Index](#). According to the World Health Organization, over [340 million Africans were undernourished and severely food insecure between 2014 and 2020](#).

Low agricultural productivity and post-harvest losses are some of the reasons.

Evidence from the past two decades [suggests](#) that genetically modified (GM) crops could resolve low agricultural productivity, nutrition and food insecurity on the continent.

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Scientists have [shown](#) that GM technology increases yield, develops disease-resistant crops, and creates varieties that can tolerate drought.

But the technology is controversial. In Africa, only Nigeria, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Malawi, Sudan, South Africa and Kenya allow commercial production and importation of GM products. Other African countries oppose them, largely because of the European Union's (EU) [stance](#) on GM products, limited scientific capacity and the high cost of regulation.

The EU's strict [regulations](#) on GM products have affected its trade partners, including countries in Africa. Egypt and Burkina Faso, which had commercialised GM maize and cotton in 2008, backtracked on GM partly because of their trade relationship with the EU.

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