

## German professor calls country's organic lobbyists 'dishonest' for hyping potential dangers of gene-edited crops

Up to €50 million has to be invested in an approval process for GM plants, and the smaller plant breeding companies are throwing in the towel, explained [University of Bonn agricultural economist Prof. Martin Qaim]. The high admission hurdles are politically and socially desired. If these were reduced, smaller breeding companies would also have a chance.

The ZEF director [Dr. Qaim] accused organic farming of being “dishonest” when it comes to genetic engineering. Mutagenesis, the creation of mutations in plant breeding through the use of chemical substances or ionizing radiation, is also legally classified as genetic engineering and is also used in organic farming. But this is kept secret, says Qaim.

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The agricultural scientist also did not accept the accusation made by opponents of genetic engineering against the EU Commission of abandoning the precautionary principle with its proposal to deregulate it.

The precautionary principle should be applied if there are indications of risks. “After 30 years of genetic engineering, we can say that there is no higher risk with GM plants than with conventional breeding.” Hurdles to genetic engineering contradict the state of science. Qaim warned, “We cannot afford to shy away from innovations...” Green genetic engineering is a piece of the mosaic that must be used in the interests of sustainability.

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

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