

Genetically modified (GM) crops have a long history of safety and offer a range of benefits.

The use of genetic engineering to introduce desired traits into plants was developed more than 25 years ago and first commercialized in 1994. GM crops offer a range of benefits to farmers, consumers and the environment by expressing traits such as herbicide tolerance, insect resistance or enhanced product quality. Every GM crop undergoes a thorough safety assessment before being approved for food, feed or cultivation.

To date, GM crops have been consumed for decades by people and animals without a single confirmed health or safety issue.

Innovation and consistency

Regulatory reviews (safety assessments), based on internationally accepted, science-based guidelines, are carried out to ensure product safety for humans, livestock and the environment. However, some regulatory agencies have diverged from the guidelines and increased their data requirements from crop developers seeking approvals.

This hinders innovation and creates regulatory uncertainty with no added safety benefit. More data

does not increase the level of product safety for consumers or the environment.

After more than 25 years of safe use and numerous benefits to farmers, consumers and the environment, it's time to review and streamline the safety assessment process for GM crops. In fact, the international standard (Codex) on which most, if not all, regulatory systems for GM crops are built clearly states that **“where appropriate, the results of a risk assessment undertaken by other regulatory authorities may be used to [...] avoid the duplication of work.”** Building on this statement and sharing science across geographies to harmonize global regulations and data requirements offers a solution to the challenges resulting from divergent regulatory requirements and asynchronous approvals.

It takes an average of **13 years** to get approval for a GM crop – longer than the **12 year** average it takes for new pharmaceutical medicines

(U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance)

Benefits of harmonized data requirements for GM crops:

Regulators:

- Leverage extensive experience of existing safety assessments and data submissions.
- Free governmental resources to focus on other areas (e.g. training, knowledge sharing and inter/intra agency collaborations).
- Provide a framework for emerging regulatory systems in countries beginning to adopt GM crops.
- Help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Consumers:

- Enjoy national and local economic growth and stability from reductions in production costs and increased yields.
- Benefit from global food and nutrition security through lower food prices and a safe, stable, food supply.
- Purchase value-added products, such as biofortified foods and crops with extended shelf life, which can reduce food waste.
- Help to protect the environment by choosing products that are sustainably grown.

Farmers:

- Expedite farmer adoption of sustainable farming practices that benefit the environment and preserve natural resources, and help farmers adapt to and mitigate climate change.
- Increase in income for rural economies resulting from yield increases.
- Result in a larger variety of traits and/or crops being commercially available to farmers.

Developers:

- Reduce product development costs and timelines, which can enable smaller and public sector developers to bring diverse agricultural innovations to the marketplace.
- Lower cost barriers to working on new crops and traits.
- Make product launch timelines more predictable, enabling resource streamlining, patent protection, and better deployment/ allocation of resources.