Earning Trust and Acceptance of Gene Editing Technology

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Abstract

Gene editing is one of today's most promising innovations, with tremendous potential to benefit society, farming and food production by making precise changes in the genome of plants, microbes and animals. Gene editing can make plants more resilient to climate change, animals resistant to disease and illness and microbes that help plants capture nitrogen from the atmosphere.

Not only is it being used to address human diseases and conditions, the technology can help farmers keep pace with the growing demand for healthier, more abundant and affordable food, while using less water, land and other resources. Gene editing has the potential to improve nutrition and the safety and quality of food, and reduce food waste.

Now is the time to double down on efforts to earn trust in gene editing. The ability of the technology to achieve its full potential hinges on public support.

A voluntary market-driven framework that assures the technology is used responsibly can help build public support. Trust will be earned when those researching and using gene editing participate in an open, public dialogue about the shared benefits of gene editing and their commitment to responsible use.

That's why CFI launched the Coalition for Responsible Gene Editing. The Coalition includes representatives from food companies, academic institutions, civil society, technology developers, farmers and related associations. The Coalition recently released its Framework for Responsible Use, which outlines seven principles and related best practices that demonstrate an organization's commitment to using gene editing responsibly to advance the interests of agriculture, the food system and society.

Gene editing will only be successful if it's adopted and embraced by farmers, food companies and, ultimately, by consumers who will buy food produced through gene editing.

Keywords:
Gene editing, responsible use, technology, market acceptance, building trust