

## Public Attitudes on the Use of Gene Drives to Manage Agricultural Pests

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### Abstract

Advances in our understanding of molecular biology and genetics, coupled with the discovery of useful molecular tools like the CRISPR associated proteins, is driving a growing interest in the development of gene drives that could be deployed to address otherwise intractable biological problems, including the control and management of agricultural pests. While gene drives continue to be improved and tested in the laboratory with a view towards use in the real world, it is pertinent to engage the public to understand how they feel about the use of such a technology. In collaboration with Rutgers University, we plan to conduct eight virtual focus groups with an objective to identify the considerations and values that drive public attitudes about gene drives. Four case examples of agricultural pests, regionally relevant to the participants will be used to conduct the focus groups. The results of the focus groups discussion will be used to design a national survey to provide a deeper understanding of public views of agricultural uses of gene drives and their governance. This presentation will cover the public engagement part involving the focus groups.

**Key words:** governance, gene drive, focus groups, public engagement