



Key messages for Agricultural Biotechnologies Symposium:

- FAO believes that in order to overcome the effects of climate change and other challenges that are preventing its member countries from attaining sustainable food systems and nutrition, we need to consider every possible solution, including agroecology and biotechnologies.
- FAO is holding this symposium as an open and neutral platform for the exchange of ideas and practices between representatives of member countries, intergovernmental organizations, research institutions, cooperatives, academia, civil society and the private sector.
- The aim is to have scientific debates and exchange of ideas on practical cases that illustrate how biotechnologies have worked successfully to benefit family farmers, food producers and consumers, especially in developing countries.
- The symposium will also explore how the results of knowledge and innovation can be put into the hands of family farmers, producers and consumers, especially in developing countries, while respecting their social and economic circumstances.
- The symposium takes a multi-sectoral approach, covering the crop, livestock, forestry and fishery sectors and the use of microorganisms within these sectors.
- The symposium will have a high-level segment where government representatives shall express and exchange their views on agricultural biotechnologies and how they can serve the needs of family farmers and other actors engaged in food and agricultural value chains.
- There will be a special student interactive session to provide an opportunity for the young generation to listen to the symposium speakers and present their views. Students from five agricultural universities around the world will hold live webinars through video links with the interactive session held in FAO, Rome.
- The symposium will focus on a broad range of agricultural biotechnologies, including many 'low-tech applications', for example fermentation processes, bio-fertilizers, artificial insemination, the production of vaccines, disease diagnostics, the development of bio-pesticides and the use of molecular markers in developing new varieties and breeds. None of these involve the production of genetically modified organisms (or GMOs).
- It is inaccurate to equate biotechnologies to GMOs only.
- It is up to individual countries to decide which agricultural biotechnologies they want to apply. This means that governments, farmers and research institutions need to carefully evaluate the benefits and the potential risks of this technology.
- FAO stands ready to continue to provide assistance to our member countries in developing capacities in assessing such benefits and risks as well as in formulating relevant policies in accordance with international norms.
- The symposium, including the presentations and discussions, will be webcast live on the FAO homepage. That enables everybody, especially those not present in Rome, to follow the proceedings.

ends