

GMO CROPS IN THE U.S.

Only a few types of [GMO crops](#)¹ are grown in the United States, but some of these GMOs make up a large percentage of the crop grown (e.g., soybeans, corn, sugar beets, canola, and cotton). Most GMO plants are used to make ingredients that are then used in other food products. For example, cornstarch can be made with GMO corn and sugar can be made with GMO sugar beets.

POTATO

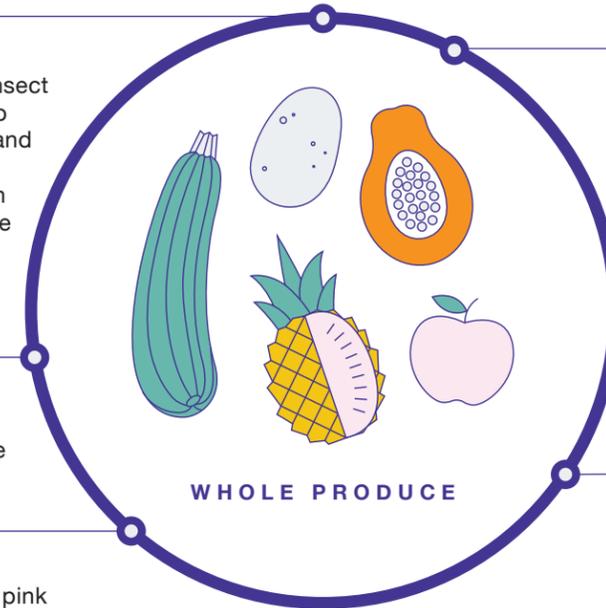
Some [GMO potatoes](#)² were developed to resist insect pests and disease. In addition, some GMO potato varieties have been developed to resist bruising and browning that can occur when potatoes are packaged, stored, and transported, or even cut in your kitchen. While browning does not change the quality of the potato, it often leads to food being unnecessarily thrown away because people mistakenly believe browned food is spoiled.

SUMMER SQUASH

GMO summer squash is resistant to some plant viruses. Squash was one of the first GMOs on the market, but it is not widely grown.

PINK PINEAPPLE

The GMO pink pineapple was developed to have pink flesh by increasing the levels of lycopene. Lycopene is naturally found in pineapples, and it is the pigment that makes tomatoes red and watermelons pink.



PAPAYA

By the 1990s, ringspot virus disease had nearly wiped out Hawaii's papaya crop, and in the process, almost destroyed the papaya industry in Hawaii. A [GMO papaya](#),³ named the Rainbow papaya, was created to resist ringspot virus. This GMO [saved papaya farming](#)⁴ on the Hawaiian Islands.

APPLE

A few varieties of GMO apples were developed to resist browning after being cut. This helps cut down on food waste, as many consumers think brown apples are spoiled.

SUGAR BEET

Sugar beets are used to make granulated sugar. More than half the granulated sugar packaged for grocery store shelves is made from GMO sugar beets. Because GMO sugar beets are resistant to herbicides, growing GMO sugar beets helps farmers control weeds in their fields. In 2013, GMO sugar beets made up [99.9%](#)⁵ of all sugar beets harvested.



CANOLA

GMO canola is used mostly to make cooking oil and margarine. Canola seed meal can also be used in food for animals. Canola oil is used in many packaged foods to improve food consistency. Most GMO canola is resistant to herbicides and helps farmers to more easily control weeds in their fields. In 2013, GMO canola made up [95%](#)⁵ of canola planted.

SOYBEAN

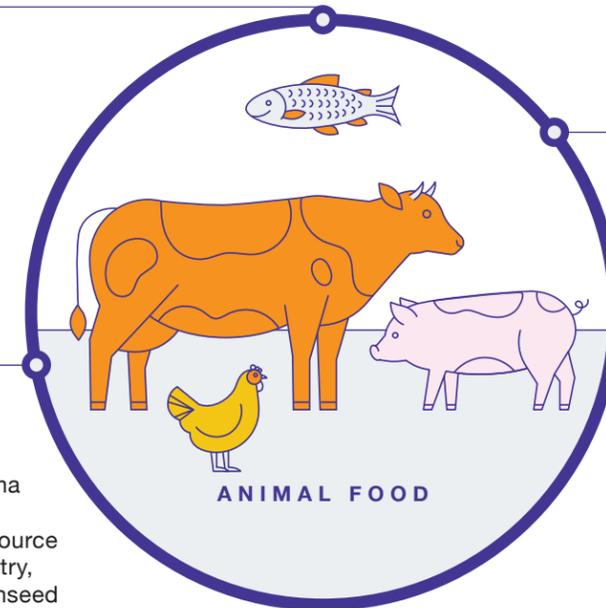
Most soy grown in the United States is GMO soy. Most GMO soy is used for food for animals, predominantly poultry and livestock, and making soybean oil. It is also used as ingredients (lecithin, emulsifiers, and proteins) in processed foods. In 2020, GMO soybeans made up [94%](#)¹ of all soybeans planted.

CORN

Most GMO corn is created to resist insect pests or tolerate herbicides. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) corn is a GMO corn that produces proteins that are toxic to certain insect pests but not to humans, pets, livestock, or other animals. These are the same types of proteins that organic farmers use to control insect pests, and they do not harm beneficial insects, such as ladybugs. GMO Bt corn reduces the need for spraying insecticides while still preventing insect damage. While a lot of GMO corn goes into processed foods and drinks, most of it is used to feed livestock, like cows, and poultry, like chickens. In 2020, [92%](#)¹ of corn planted was GMO corn.

COTTON

GMO cotton was created to be resistant to bollworms and helped revive the Alabama cotton industry. GMO cotton not only provides a reliable source of cotton for the textile industry, it is also used to make cottonseed oil, which is used in packaged foods and in many restaurants for frying. GMO cottonseed meal and hulls are also used in food for animals. In 2020, GMO cotton made up [96%](#)¹ of all cotton planted.



ALFALFA

GMO alfalfa is primarily used to feed cattle—mostly dairy cows. Most [GMO alfalfa](#)⁶ is resistant to herbicides, allowing farmers to spray the crops to protect them against destructive weeds that can reduce alfalfa production and lower the nutritional quality of the hay.

Sources:

¹<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/adoption-of-genetically-engineered-crops-in-the-us.aspx>

²https://www.aphis.usda.gov/brs/aphisdocs/13_02201p_dea.pdf

³<https://pubag.nal.usda.gov/catalog/490739>

⁴<https://www.usda.gov/topics/biotechnology/biotechnology-frequently-asked-questions-faqs>

⁵<https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/81176/eib-163.pdf?v=42697>

⁶<https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2017/may/genetically-modified-alfalfa-production-in-the-united-states/>