

Biotechnology: Why Biotechnology Matters

Many people are beginning to appreciate more deeply the bonds between human well-being, social stability and the natural processes of the earth that sustain all life. They are realizing that the earth's capacity to continue providing clean air and water, productive soils and a rich diversity of plant and animal life is central to ensuring quality of life for ourselves and our descendants.

Current population growth is already straining the earth's resources. One of the few certainties of the future is that the world's population will nearly double, reaching almost 10 billion inhabitants by the year 2030. According to Ismail Serageldin of the World Bank, "Biotechnology will be a crucial part of expanding agricultural productivity in the 21st century. If safely deployed, it could be a tremendous help in meeting the challenge of feeding an additional three billion human beings, 95% of them in the poor developing countries, on the same amount of land and water currently available."

Biotechnology, which allows the transfer of a gene for a specific trait from one plant variety or species to another, is one important piece of the puzzle of sustainable development.

Experts assert that biotechnology innovations will triple crop yields without requiring any additional farmland, saving valuable rain forests and animal habitats. Other innovations can reduce or eliminate reliance on pesticides and herbicides that may contribute to environmental degradation. Still others can preserve precious grounds oils and water resources.

Most experts agree that the world doesn't have the luxury of waiting to act. By working now to put in place the technology and the infrastructure required to meet future food needs, we can feed the world for centuries to come and improve the quality of life for people worldwide.

Sources and Links

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