



## **Un po' di new breeding technique per una difesa sostenibile e sicura**

**PROF, PhD BRUNO MEZZETTI**

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE AGRARIE, ALIMENTARI ED AMBIENTALI  
UNIVERSITA' POLITECNICA DELLE MARCHE, ANCONA

Email:[b.mezzetti@univpm.it](mailto:b.mezzetti@univpm.it)

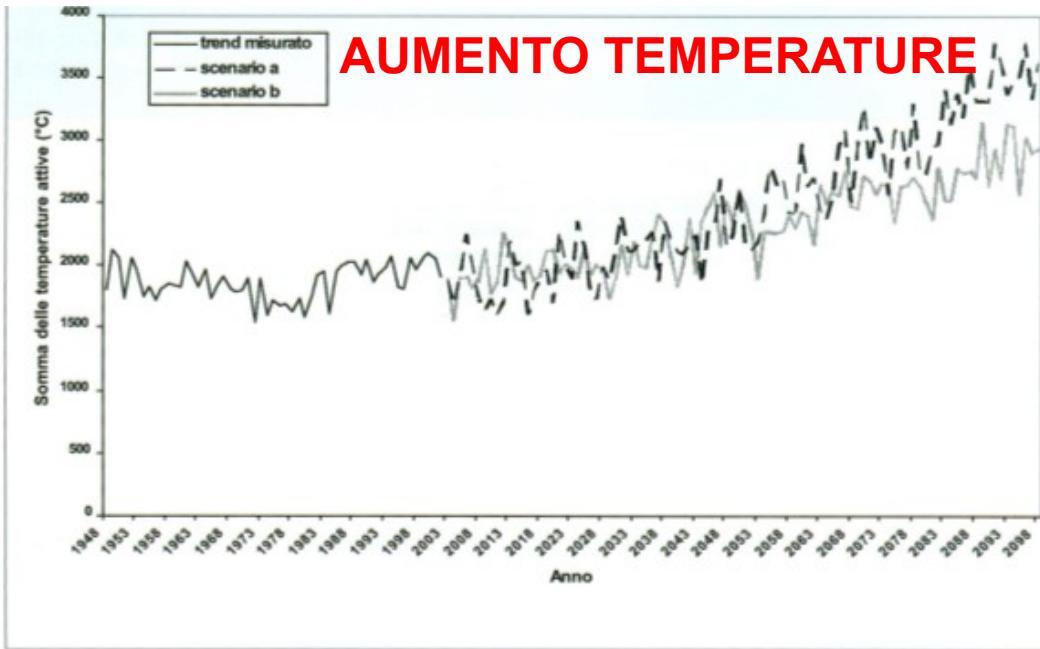
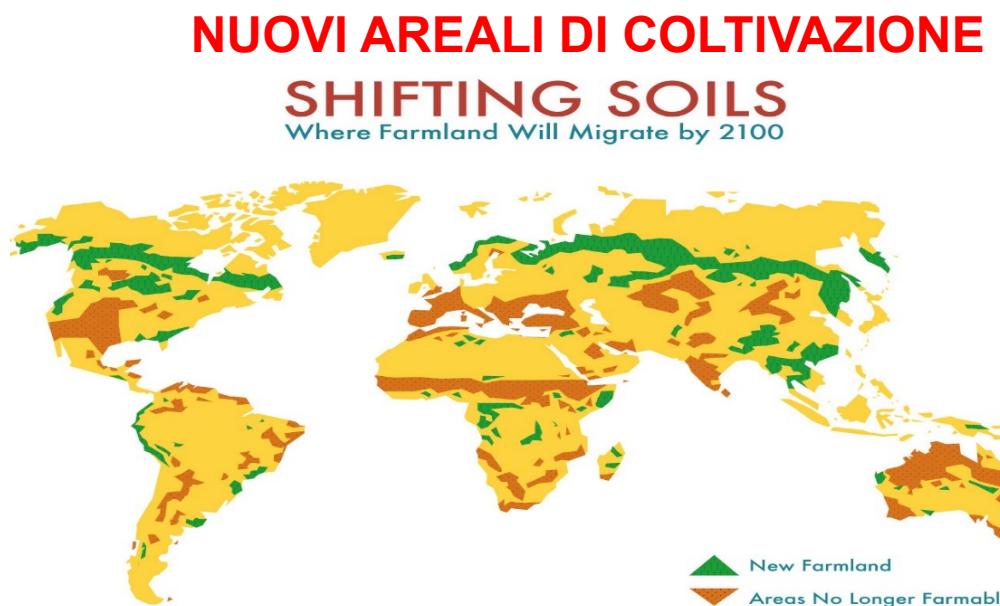


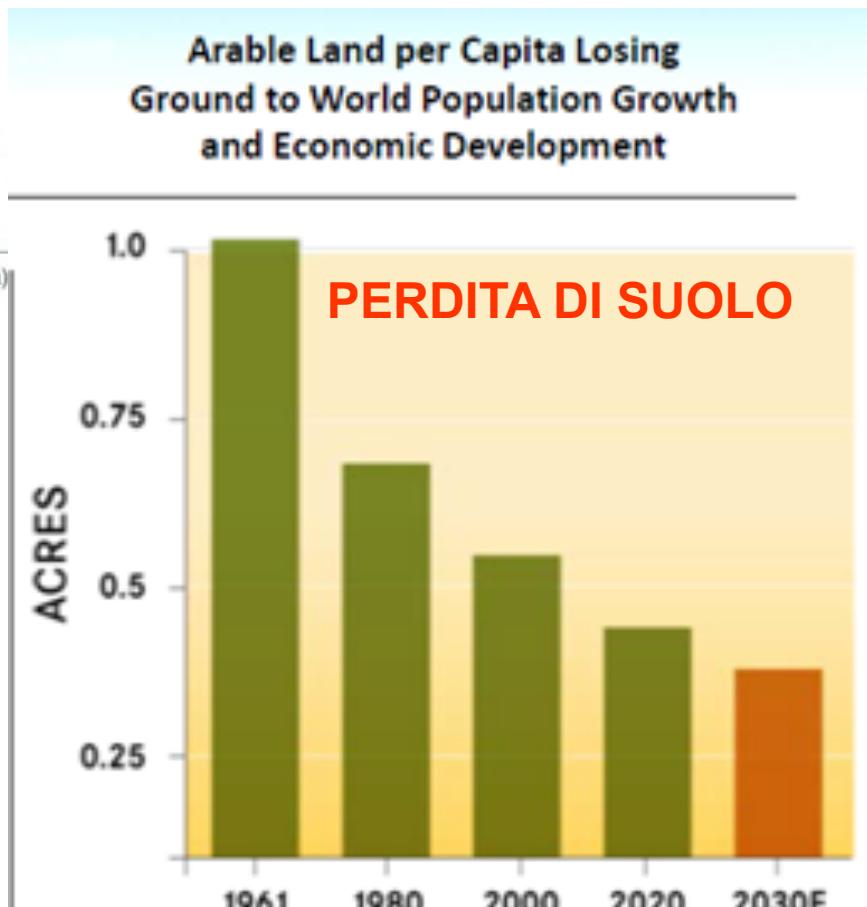
Fig. 1. Andamento della somma delle temperature attive osservato nel periodo 1948-2002 (linea continua) previsto secondo lo scenario a (linea tratteggiata) e lo scenario b (linea grigia) nel periodo 2003-2098.



: dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0107522

WWW.HOWWEGETTONEXT

## EMERGENZE: CAMBIAMENTI CLIMATICI RIDUZIONE SUOLO COLTIVATO



**PERDITA DI SUOLO**  
**Arable Land per Capita Worldwide**

**Per l'Agricoltura del XXI secolo, il modello meccanica, chimica e genetica è da rivedere e integrare con tutte le conoscenze e verifiche scientifiche (agronomia, biologia, ecologia, pedologia, difesa, tecnologie..).**

**VALORIZZARE LA MULTIFUNZIONALITA' DELL'AGRICOLTURA:  
ALIMENTI, MATERIALI, ENERGIA,ORNAMENTO,  
PROTEZIONE AMBIENTALE, INCLUSIONE SOCIALE**

***Individuare nuove strategie per l'AGRICOLTURA SOSTENIBILE del futuro:***

- a basso impatto ambientale
- elevata efficienza produttiva
- garanzia salute e reddito agricoltore
- qualità e salute consumatori



# WHEN THE PESTICIDES RUN OUT

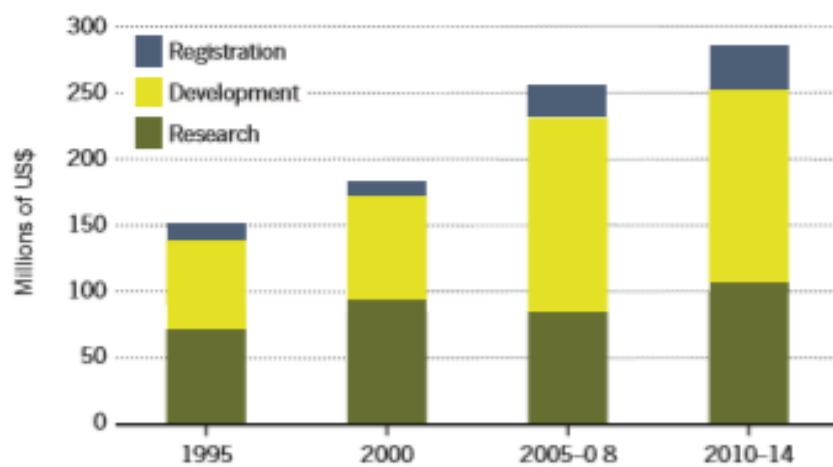
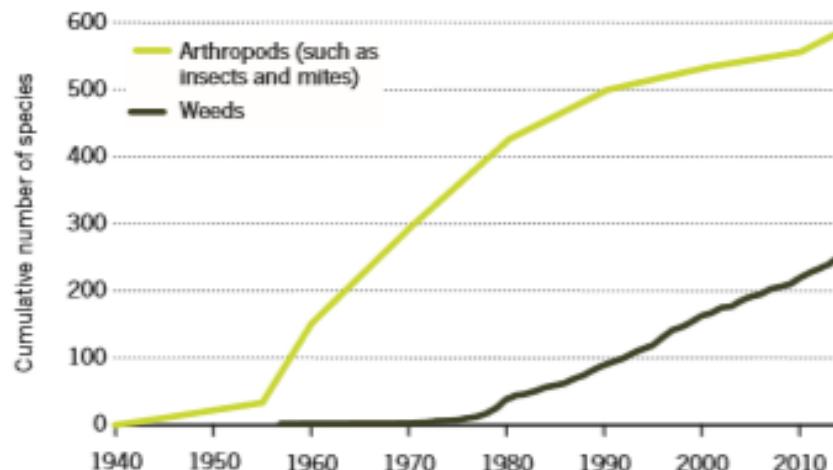
*Resistance is exhausting the agricultural arsenal against insects, weeds and disease. New biological approaches could help.*

BY BROOKE BOREL

302 | NATURE | VOL 543 | 16 MARCH 2017

## THE RISE OF RESISTANCE

The number of pests (including insect and plant species) resistant to at least one form of synthetic pesticide has been steadily on the rise for decades, as has the cost of developing such chemicals.

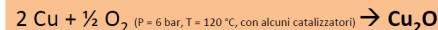


*iPlanta*

# SOSTENIBILITA': PESTICIDI, UN PROBLEMA MERAMENTE PERCETTIVO

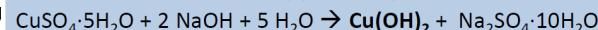
5 principi attivi rameici: 5 Sintesi

Ossido rameoso:

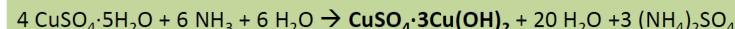


Idrossido di rame:

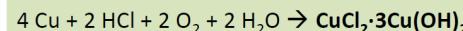
(in presenza di fosfati)



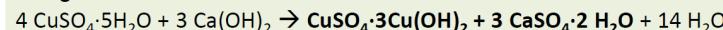
Solfato di rame tribasico:



Ossicloruro di rame:

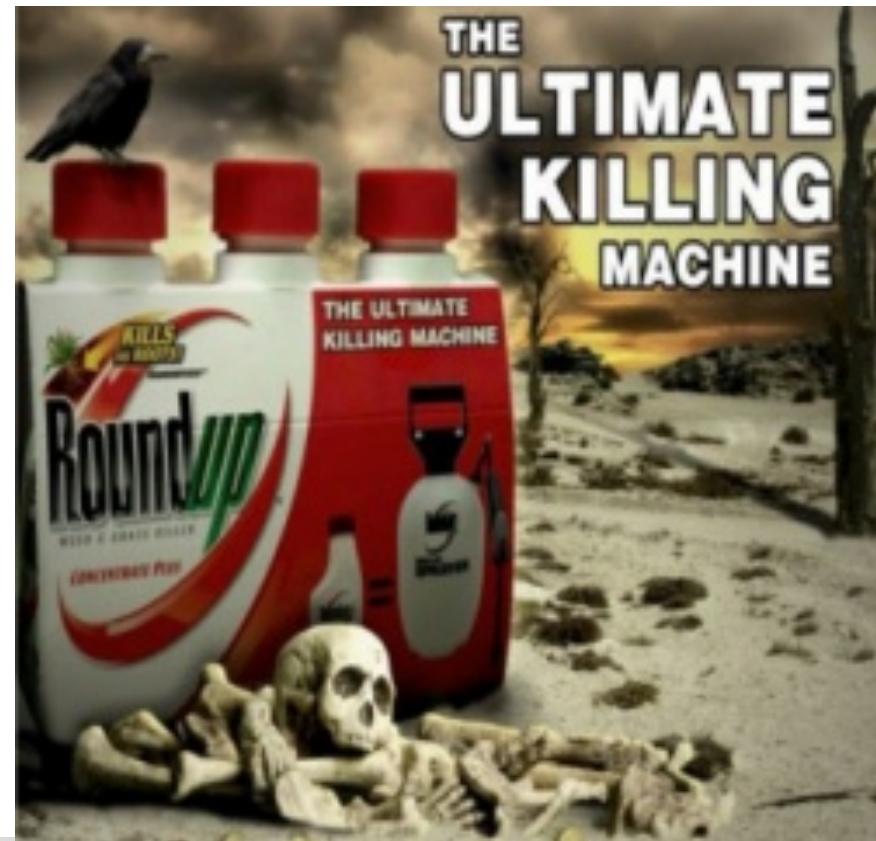


Poltiglia bordolese:



posing nutritional quackery

**IT'S THE MOST WIDELY USED  
PESTICIDE IN ORGANIC FARMING**

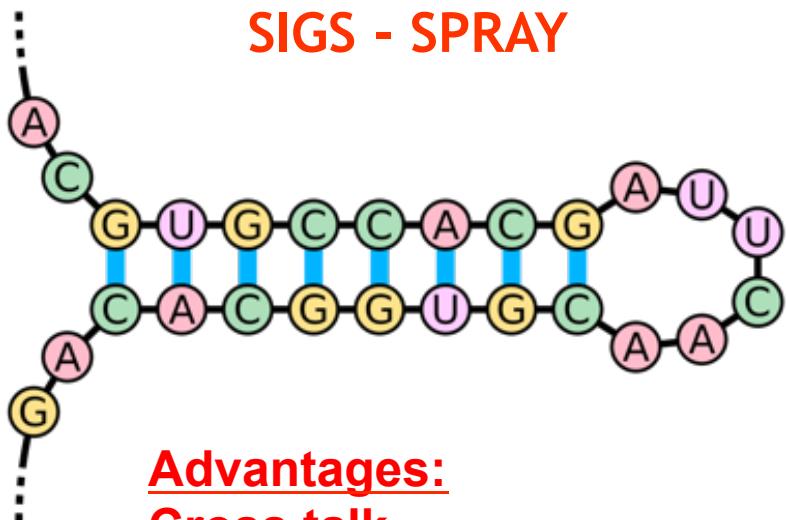


i saranno nuovi erbicidi o chi vuole può tornare a zappare.

# RNAi versus CRISP/Cas9

RNAi inhibits gene expression  
in a sequence-specific manner  
induced by double strand RNA  
(dsRNA)

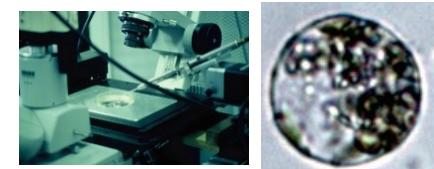
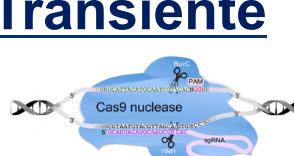
HIGS - TRANSGENICO  
SIGS - SPRAY



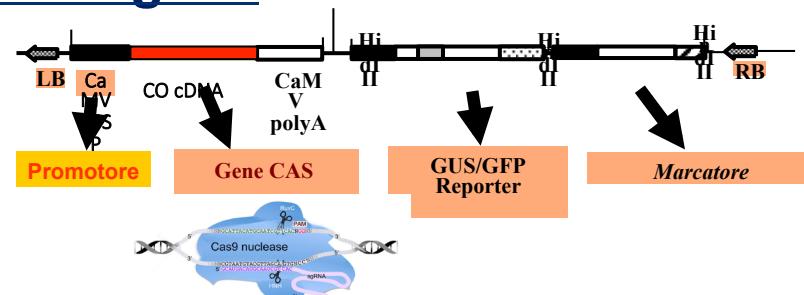
Advantages:  
Cross talk  
Mobility  
Topical application

## Gene Editing:

### Transiente



### Transgene



In planta gene silencing can be replaced by Gene Editing.

Conoscere i geni di resistenza da modificare

frontiers  
in Plant Science

New Biotechnological Tools for the  
Genetic Improvement of Major  
Woody Fruit Species

Cecilia Limera<sup>1</sup>, Silvia Sabbadini<sup>1</sup>, Jeremy B. Sweet<sup>2</sup> and Bruno Mezzetti<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences, Università Politecnica delle Marche, Ancona, Italy; <sup>2</sup> J. T. Environmental Consultants Ltd, Cambridge, United Kingdom

REVIEW  
published: 15 August 2017  
doi: 10.3389/fpls.2017.01418



**iPlanta**

# STUDIARE LA COMUNICAZIONE TRA ORGANISMI PER ISOLARE GENI DI RESISTENZA E/O METABOLITI/RNAi INDUTTORI DI RESISTENZA

**CROSS-KINGDOM RNAi**

Evidence from laboratory studies of plants and their fungal pathogens indicates that both parties can sling RNAs back and forth into the other's cells. Plants appear to use these molecules to resist infection, while fungal microbes call upon RNA to enhance their spread. Both types of organisms achieve their desired outcomes through the same molecular process: RNA Interference (RNAi), which disrupts gene expression by destroying target messenger RNAs.

The diagram shows a plant cell and a fungal cell. In the plant cell (green), step 1 shows the genome producing small RNA precursors. Step 2 shows these precursors being transferred to the fungal cell (brown). Step 3 shows the fungal cell processing these into small RNAs, which then enter the plant cell. Inside the plant cell, step 4 shows the small RNAs being incorporated into the RISC complex, leading to mRNA degradation (step 5). The fungal cell also shows mRNA degradation (step 5) and the generation of its own small RNAs (step 1).

**FROM PLANT TO PATHOGEN**

The plant produces a small RNA precursor, either a long double-stranded RNA or a pre-microRNA, with sequence similarity to a fungal gene ①. Researchers have engineered the sequence into the genomes of crop plants or model organisms and demonstrated superior fungal resistance, although one recent study showed plants may naturally encode sequences to protect themselves against pathogens.

Evidence points to the idea that the small RNA precursors can pass directly to the fungal cell ② or undergo processing into small RNAs prior to transfer ③. If the precursor leaves the plant intact, the fungus's processing machinery chops it up ④. In either case, the result is a plant small RNA inside the fungal cell, though the mechanism of transfer remains unknown.

Upon additional processing in the fungal cell, a single strand of the small RNA becomes part of the RNA-induced silencing complex (RISC), which then destroys an mRNA with a matching sequence ⑤. If the transcript is essential to fungus growth, the pathogen dies and the plant staves off disease.

**PESTICIDI MOLECOLARI**

The diagram shows a pathogen (brown) releasing small RNAs (step 1) into a plant cell (green). These small RNAs enter the plant cell and are incorporated into the RISC complex (step 2). The RISC complex degrades plant mRNA (step 3), leading to mRNA degradation (step 4). The pathogen also shows mRNA degradation (step 5) and the generation of its own small RNAs (step 1).

**FROM PATHOGEN TO PLANT**

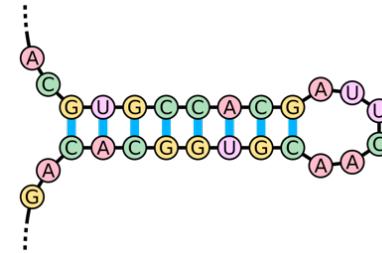
Scientists have also discovered that fungal pathogens can send RNAs into plant cells to aid their invasion. Similar to the reverse process, the fungus generates small RNA precursors whose sequences complement those of plant mRNAs ①. A fungal protein slices up the small RNA precursors to produce small RNAs ②, which are then passed over to the plant cell via unknown means.

Inside the plant cell, the small RNAs are incorporated into the plant's RISC and direct the complex to degrade the target transcript ③. If the genes affected are involved in plant immunity, the fungal infection expands.

NEIL SORIANO

HIGS

## Chewing insects



RNAi activity in tobacco targeting the cytochrome p450 monooxygenase gene (*CYPAE14*) of the cotton bollworm, *Helicoverpa armigera* inhibited expression of the *CYPAE14* in this lepidopteran pest. The inhibition of *CYPAE14* expression in these insects led to their increased sensitivity to the natural defence compound, gossypol, produced by the plant. (Mao et al., 2011)

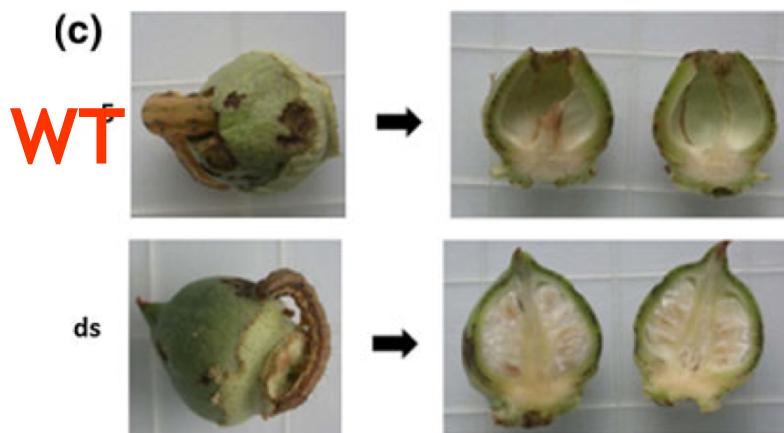
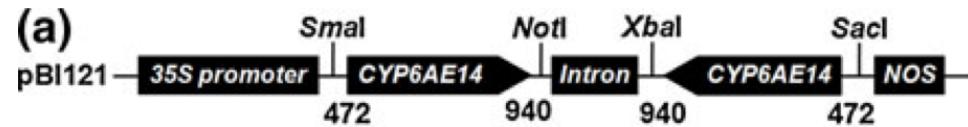


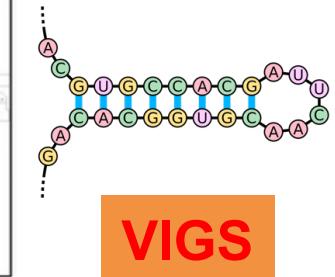
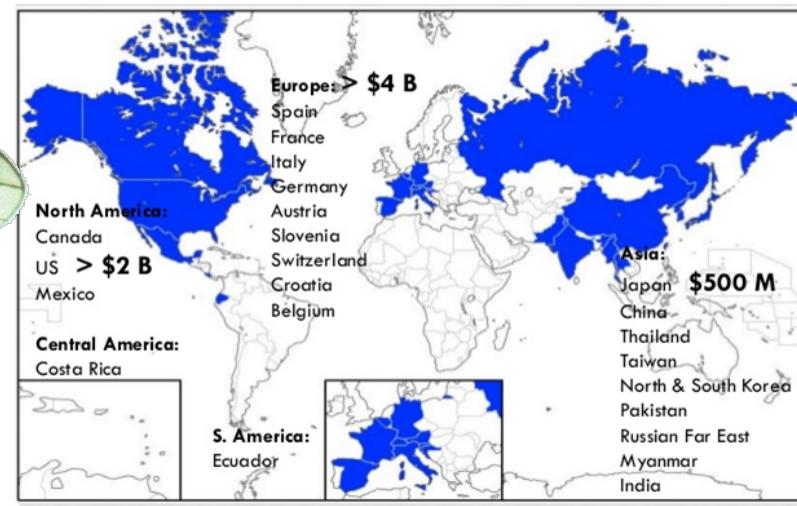
Image of larvae on cotton boll. Larvae previously reared on leaves of control R15 or ds6-3 T2 plants for 10 days were transferred to cotton boll for another day



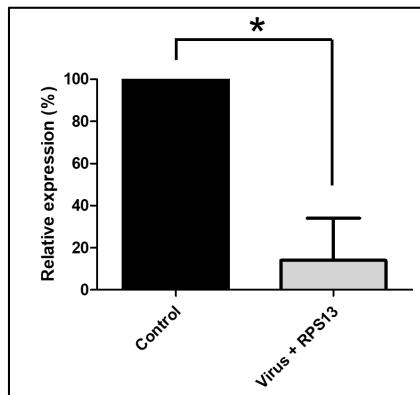
# ANOTHER IMPORTANT EMERGENCY IN EU: RNAi: virus-induced gene-silencing against invasive wing-spotted fruit fly *Drosophila suzukii*



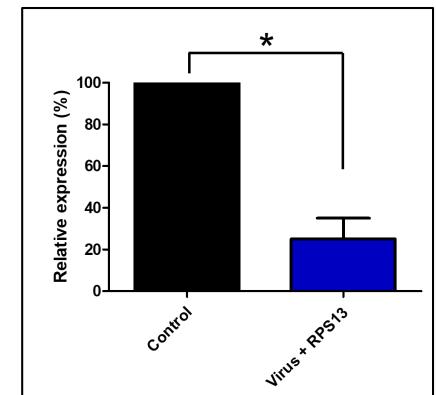
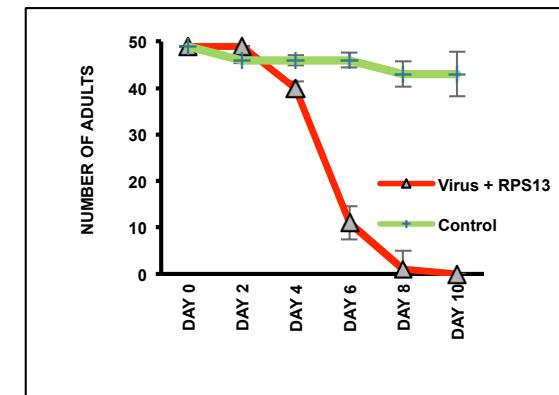
Dr. Clauvis  
Taning



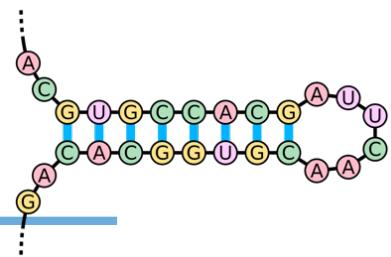
VIGS in cells with engineered Flock House Virus



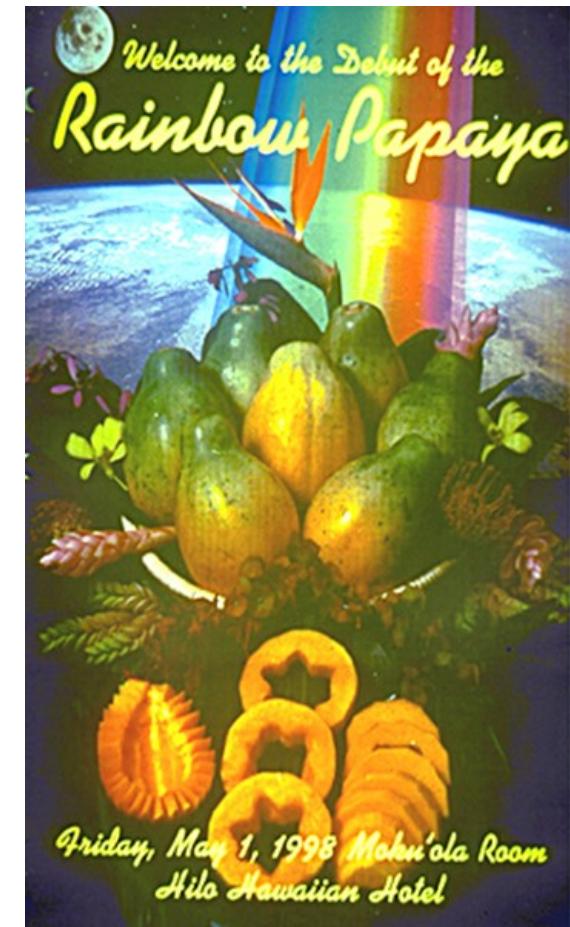
VIGS effects in adult flies



# I case study: PRSV-RESISTANT TRANSGENIC PAPAYA



In 1992 a papaya expressing the coat protein of *papaya ringspot virus* (PRSV), shown fully resistance to the virus under field condition (Fitch *et al.* 1992).

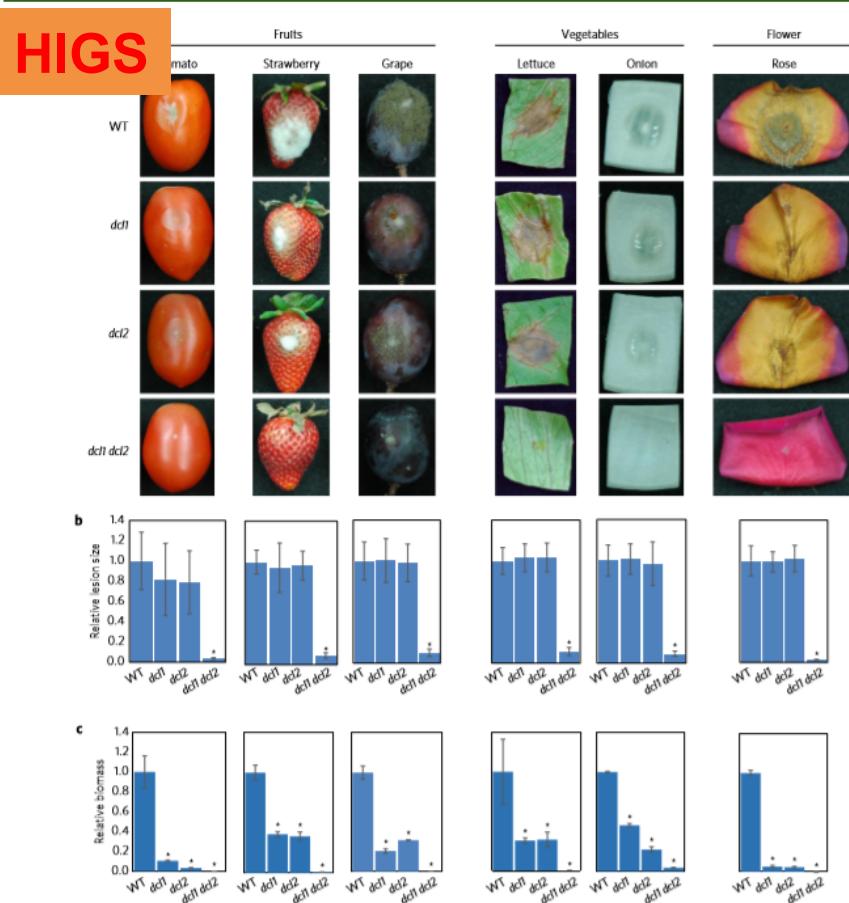


## Bidirectional cross-kingdom RNAi and fungal uptake of external RNAs confer plant protection

Ming Wang<sup>1</sup>, Arne Weiberg<sup>1†</sup>, Feng-Mao Lin<sup>2</sup>, Bart P. H. J. Thomma<sup>3</sup>, Hsien-Da Huang<sup>2</sup>  
and Hailing Jin<sup>1\*</sup>

## ARTICLES

## NATURE PLANTS DOI: 10.1038/NPLANTS.2016.151

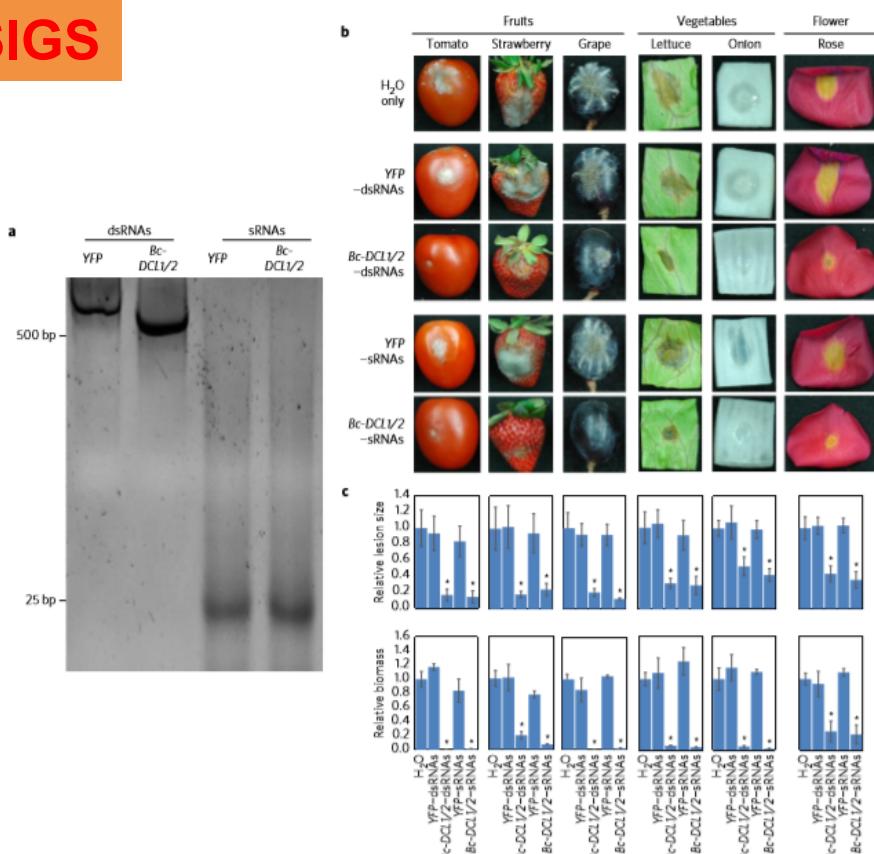


**Figure 1 |** *B. cinerea* *dcl1 dcl2* double mutant, but not the *dcl1* or *dcl2* single mutants, displays reduced virulence on fruits, vegetables, and flower petals. **a**, *B. cinerea* *dcl1 dcl2* double mutant shows compromised virulence on fruits (tomato, strawberry and grape), vegetables (lettuce and onion) and flower petals (rose). **b**, *B. cinerea* *dcl1* or *dcl2* single mutants showed similar virulence as the WT strain. **c**, Relative lesion sizes of the infected plant samples were measured 3 days post inoculation (dpi) for lettuce, onion and strawberry and 5 dpi for tomato, grape and rose petal using ImageJ. Error bars indicate the standard deviations (s.d.) of ten samples. **c**, *B. cinerea* relative DNA content (relative biomass) was measured by quantitative PCR. Error bars indicate the s.d. of three technical replicates. Asterisks indicate statistically significant differences ( $P < 0.01$ ). Similar results were obtained from at least three biological replicates.

## Very high potentials for controlling diseases in horticultural plants

## ARTICLES

## NATURE PLANTS DOI: 10.1038/NPLANTS.2016.151

**SIGS**

**Figure 4 |** Externally applied *Bc-DCL1/2*-sRNAs and -dsRNAs inhibited pathogen virulence on fruits, vegetables, and flower petals. **a**, *Bc-DCL1/2*-dsRNAs and -sRNAs, as well as YFP-dsRNAs and -sRNAs, were synthesized and processed, and 100 ng of RNAs was analysed on a native PAGE gel to check the quality. **b**, External application of *Bc-DCL1/2*-dsRNAs and -sRNAs (20  $\mu$ l of 20 ng  $\mu$ l<sup>-1</sup> synthetic RNAs) inhibits the virulence of *B. cinerea* on fruits (tomato, strawberry and grape), vegetables (lettuce and onion) and flower petals (rose) compared with the treatments using water, YFP-dsRNAs and -sRNAs. **c**, The relative lesion sizes and fungal biomass were measured at 3 dpi for lettuce, onion and strawberry and at 5 dpi for tomato and grape fruits using ImageJ software and quantitative PCR, respectively. Error bars indicate the s.d. of three technical replicates. Asterisks indicate statistically significant differences ( $P < 0.01$ ).

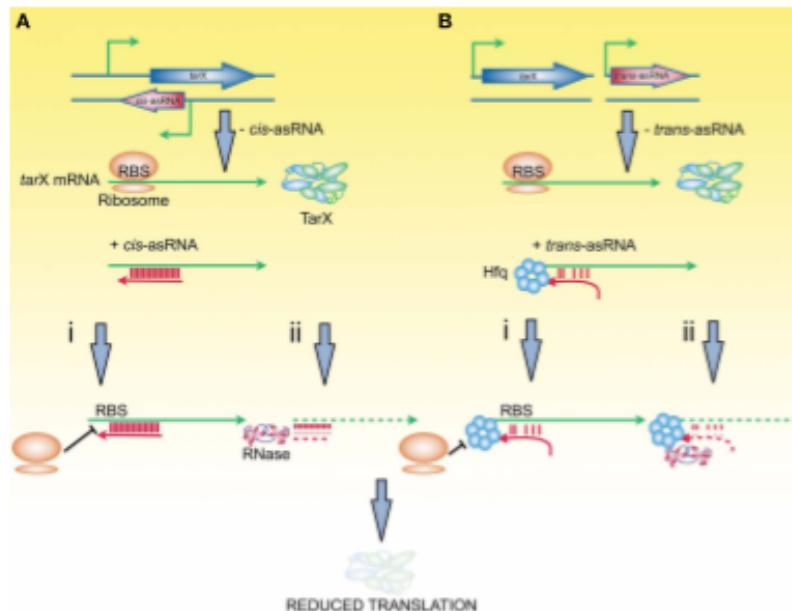


## Synthetic RNA silencing in bacteria – antimicrobial discovery and resistance breaking

Liam Good<sup>1</sup> and James E. M. Stach<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Pathology and Infectious Diseases, Royal Veterinary College, University of London, London, UK

<sup>2</sup> School of Biology, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

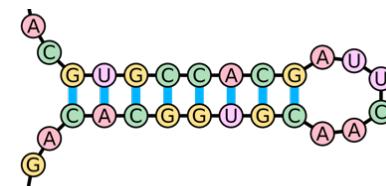


**FIGURE 1 |** Natural RNA silencing in bacteria. (A) Antisense RNAs (asRNAs) that are *cis*-encoded share high degrees of complementarity with the target mRNA. (B) asRNAs that are *trans*-encoded have limited complementarity with the target mRNA and, in some species, require the an RNA chaperone (Hfq) to

facilitate binding. In either case, once the asRNA is bound to the target mRNA, translation of the target gene (*tarX*) is silenced by inhibition of ribosome binding to the target mRNA (ii); induced RNase degradation of the asRNA:mRNA hybrid (iii) or a combination of both processes.



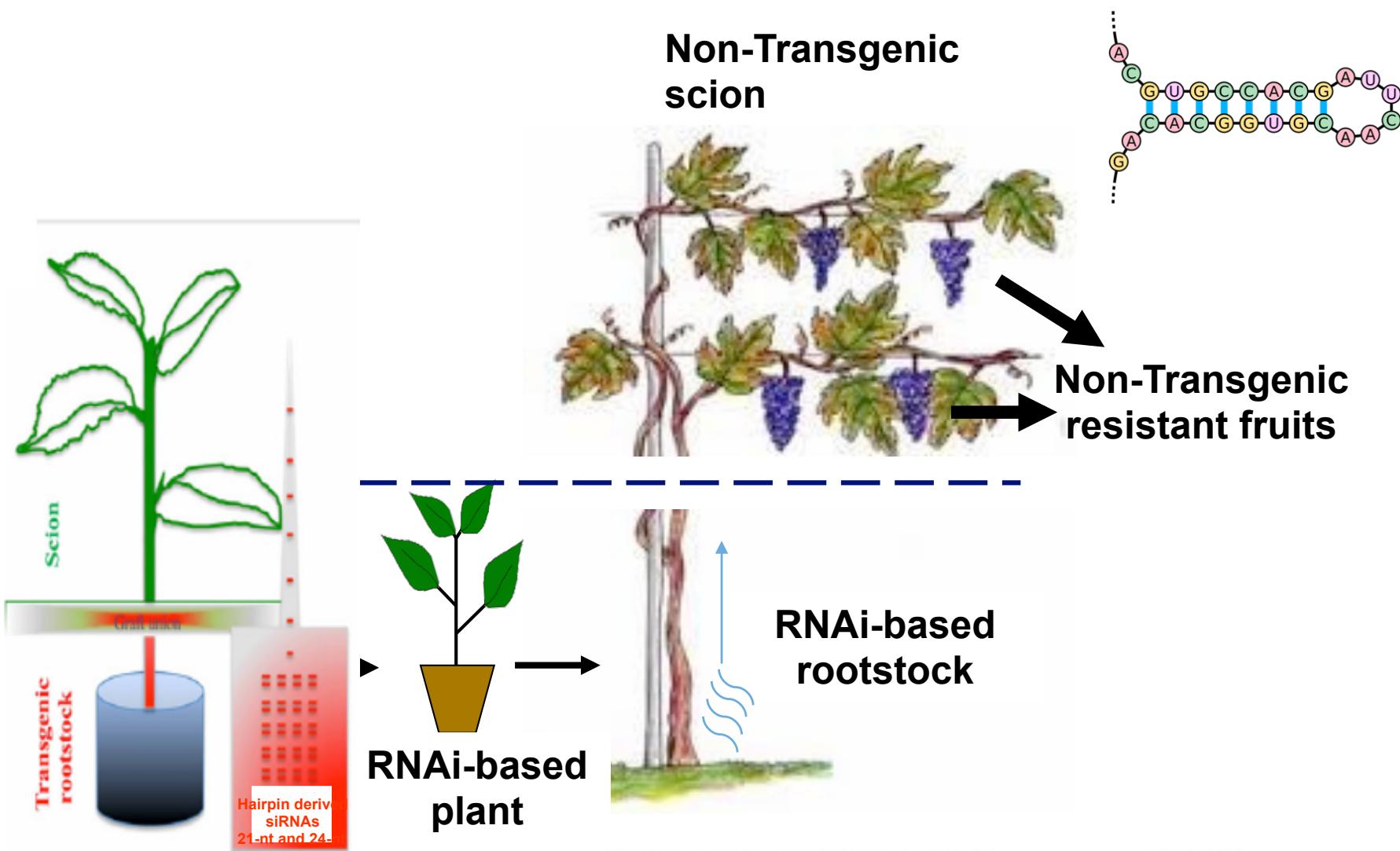
Or acting on the vector  
*Philaenus spumarius*



**A POWERFUL STRATEGY  
TO SOLVE IMPORTAN  
EMERGENCY IN EU, eg.  
*Xylella fastidiosa* AFFECTING  
OLIVE PRODUCTION**



# RNAi-based Rootstock grafted on a wild type scion



Zhao & Song (2014). Plant biotechnology journal

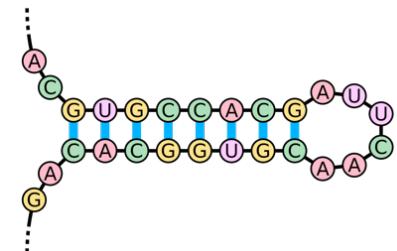
Advantages in the use of a silenced rootstock:

- The scion maintains its genetic inheritance.
- There is not gene flow because pollen and seed are not genetically modified.

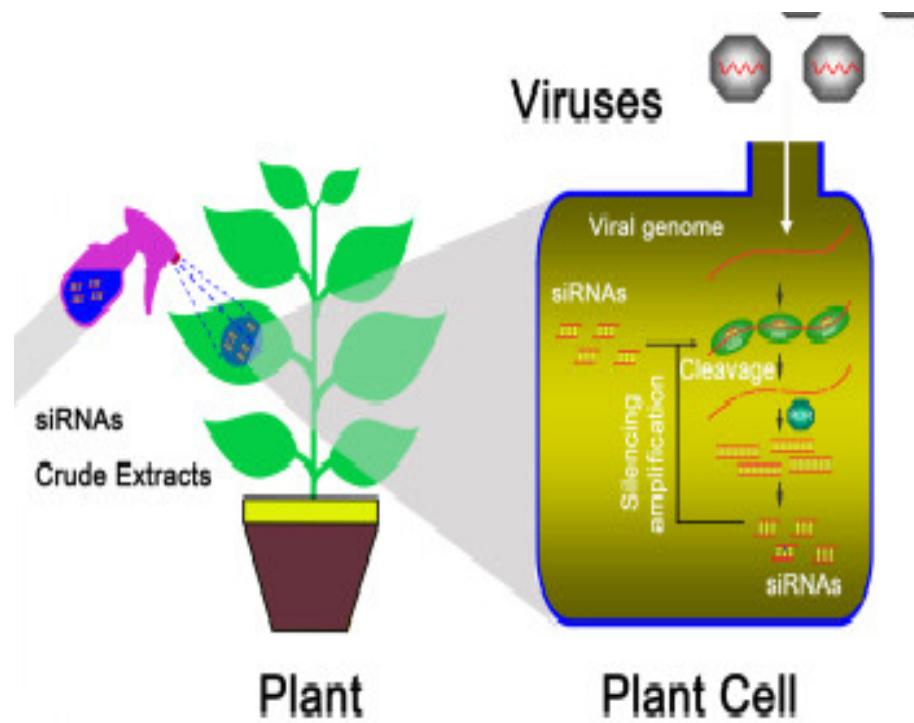
PUBLIC  
ACCEPTANCE

LOW  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
RISK

## *Exogenous induction*



### 3) Application of dsRNA on plant surface by spray.



Insect  
Fungi  
Bacteria  
...  
Control fruit  
ripening

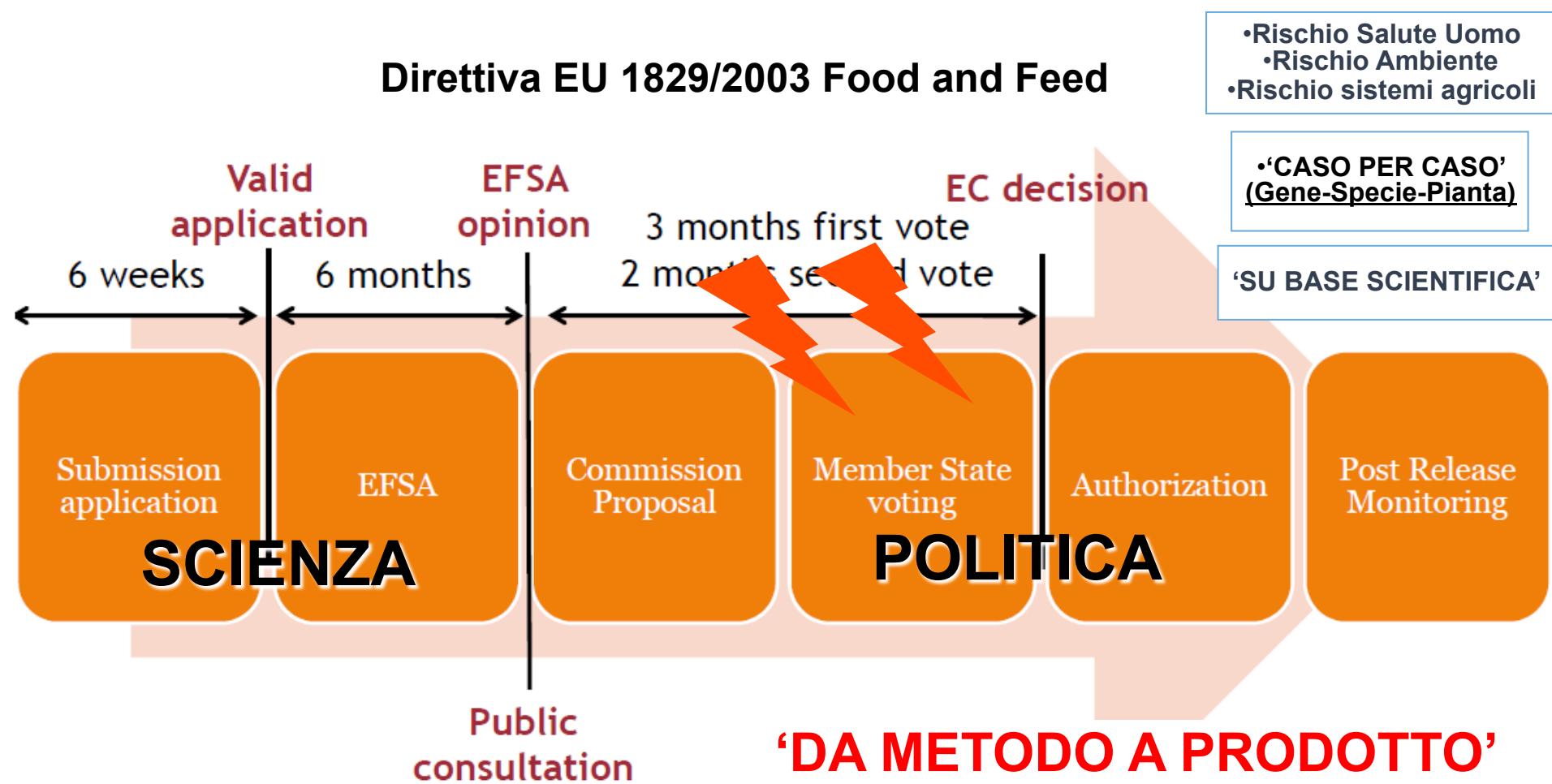
C. Duan, C. Wang and H. Guo (2012) Application of RNA silencing to plant disease resistance Silence 2012, 3:5.

# To be or not to be.... GMO

## RNAi applications in question

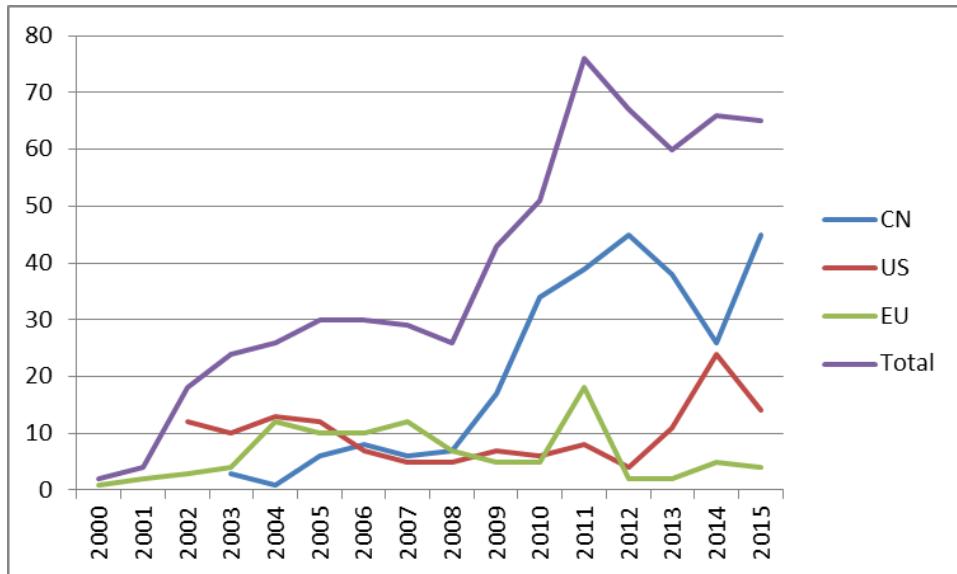
- Stable expression of dsRNA in plants **GMO HIGS**
- Cis/Intragenic plants **no / GMO**
- Intermediate GMOs **no GMO**
- Grafting on GM-rootstocks **no GMO**
- Genome editing **Gene editing is GM, says European Court (25/07/2018)** **GMO**
- **RNAi Spray – SIGS No GMO – sostituiranno gli attuali pesticidi**

# 1) Come gestire l'incubo delle Regole EU sugli OGM.



‘INCERTEZZA E RISCHIO D’IMPRESA’ - ‘GARANZIA PER IL CONSUMATORE’

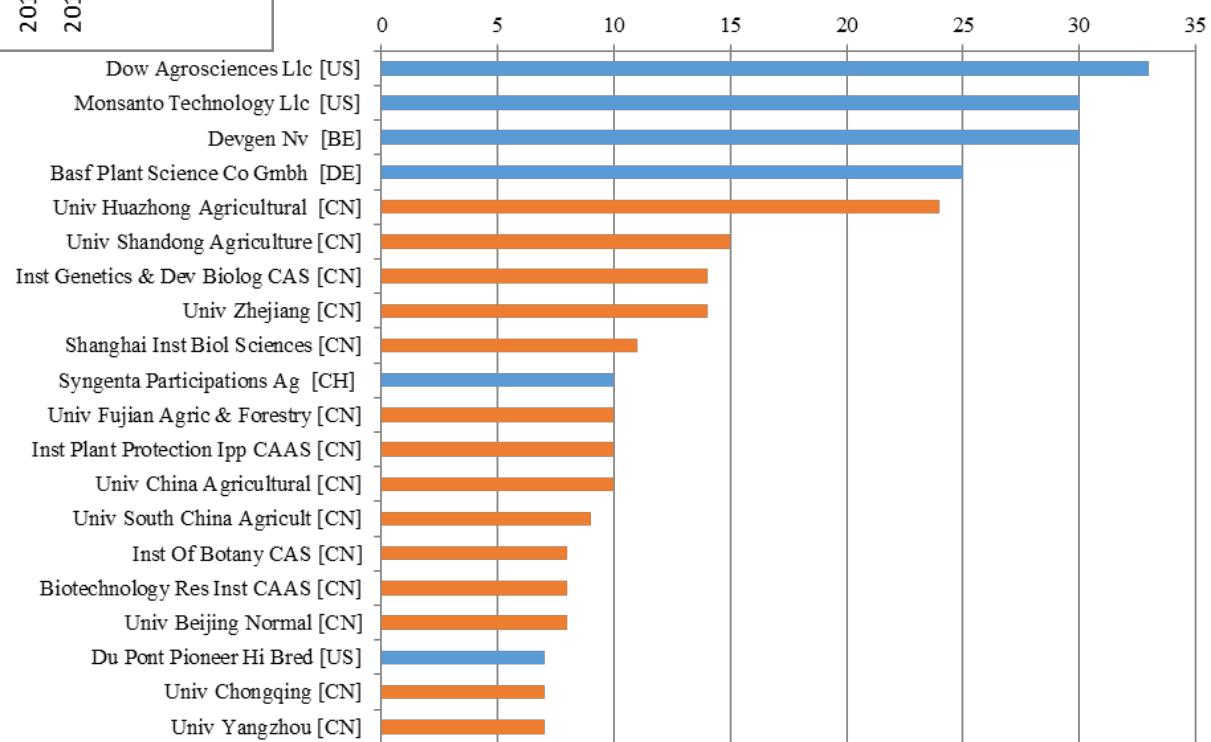
QUALE STRATEGIA D’USO DELL’INNOVAZIONE PER LO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE?



**Figure 1. Time trend for plant-RNAi inventions**

Source: own elaboration on Espacenet data

**FACTS:**  
**Socio-economical impact of RNAi technology measured in number of patent released in different areas and by companies.**



**D. Frisio and V. Ventura, 2018.  
RNAi in agriculture: a Chinese interference? In press**

**Figure 2. Plant RNAi patent - Top Assignee**

Note: In red colour Chinese assignee. Source: Elaborations on Espacenet data

## **Quale strategia: affrontare i punti critici che hanno fermato le biotecnologie vegetali**

- 4) Mostrare i prodotti.** Negli ultimi 15 anni, a causa delle difficoltà create nei diversi paesi (blocco politico con sanzioni, assenza di finanziamenti e paura della distruzione da parte di anti-OGM) e dell'idea che tutto avrebbe potuto essere risolto dalle nuove regole sulla cisgenesi e sul genome editing, la ricerca sulle biotecnologie vegetali è stata quasi completamente bloccata e, in particolare, sono state realizzate pochissime sperimentazioni in serra e in campo.
- 5) Importanza della scienza interdisciplinare.** La maggior parte dell'industria privata considera la scienza accademica un 'caos', non solo per la ricerca ma anche per la scarsa fiducia/conoscenza del processo di regolamentazione.
- 6) Replicare alle ONG.** Il movimento anti-OGM è portato avanti dall'attività di molte ONG ed organizzazioni che operano a livello globale e che trovano sostegno a livello locale.



**Sen. Prof. Elena Cattaneo**

Alla c.a. del sig. Michele Serra  
La Repubblica  
Roma, 7 dicembre 2018

Gentile Sig. Serra,

la sua risposta su La Repubblica del 24 novembre mi fornisce l'occasione per approfondire alcuni aspetti che, per il contesto della sua iniziale segnalazione ("L'Amaca", La Repubblica, 21 novembre 2018) e comprensibili questioni di spazi del giornale, mi era stato impossibile affrontare nella mia lettera del 23 novembre.

Lo farò ora, dopo molti colloqui, letture e ore di studio che da tempo dedico a capire il "**prodotto biologico**". In particolare, desidero capire perché i consumatori lo trovino nei supermercati a costi elevati, cioè quali sarebbero le migliori qualità del prodotto che ne giustificano il maggior prezzo (fino al 110% in più e in alcuni casi anche oltre). Ma anche quali siano le garanzie di sicurezza sui prodotti biologici e le verifiche a monte e a valle della filiera, di quante risorse necessiti "il biologico" per essere realizzato (anche in termini di terra) e quanto se ne produca per unità di suolo. C'è anche da comprendere in modo più accurato "quanti gas serra emette", quali pesticidi usa e se e quanto questi sono dannosi per l'ecosistema. In sostanza, mi chiedo quali siano le proiezioni temporali e le conseguenze di "un mondo a biologico", con quale utilità e per chi. Per comprendere, mi informo. Lo faccio anche per confrontare questo processo agricolo con l'agricoltura