MESSAGE MAP

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asta | american seed trade association

Tools for Thoughtful Conversation

What It Is

Evolving plant breeding methods are powerful tools plant breeders use to help farmers solve some of their most pressing challenges, such as changing weather, plant disease and pests, decreased inputs and consumer demands for variety.

How to Use It

The Message Map outlines how we define plant breeding innovations and the purpose. Specifically WHAT plant breeding innovations are, WHY we use them, and HOW they enable us to create characteristics in seeds to address the unmet needs of farmers and consumers. It is meant as a guide to talk about plant breeding innovation, including gene editing, in terms the general public will understand.

When to Use It

Use this as a guide when talking about plant breeding innovations. Focus on what plant breeding innovations are, but also how they can be one solution to help solve challenges faced by farmers and consumers.

ASTA Plant Breeding Innovations Message Platform

HALO MESSAGE

Through evolving plant breeding methods that work within the genetic makeup of plants' own families, plant scientists and breeders provide farmers with seeds that can thrive despite challenges, such as changing weather, plant disease and pests, while reducing crop inputs.

Additional Support

Newer methods like gene editing build on what plant scientists and breeders have been doing for years, and allow us to reach the same endpoint more precisely than traditional methods.

What Is It?

Through evolving plant breeding methods that work within the genetic makeup of plants' own families, plant scientists and breeders create characteristics in seeds to address the unmet needs of farmers and consumers.

Additional Support

Gene editing is an example of plant breeding innovation that allows plant scientists and breeders to precisely make specific changes to a plant's DNA using a plant's own internal processes. The result can be the activation of a beneficial characteristic (such as drought tolerance or increased nutrition), deactivation of an unfavorable characteristic (such as disease sensitivity) or small changes to the DNA that reproduce a characteristic found within the plant's family (such as a disease resistant characteristic found in a wild relative). Like traditional breeding methods, through gene editing we can develop new plant varieties without incorporating foreign DNA. CRISPR–Cas9 is one example of a gene editing tool.

Why? (Farmer's Story)

In order to grow more using less, farmers need a variety of seed choices to solve their local needs, manage changing weather, fight plant disease and pests and wisely use crop inputs and natural resources.

Relevance to Consumers

Consumers want healthy and safe food for their families, their environment and their community – today and in the future. They want farmers to produce a variety of food choices, while wisely using natural resources, solving challenges locally and reducing crop inputs. Plant breeding innovations, like gene editing, allows for this and more.

Message Map

Farmer's Story
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Plant Breeding Innovations
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TIPS TO APPROACH A CONVERSATION ABOUT PLANT BREEDING INNOVATIONS

When talking with non-scientists and consumers, use this message map and tips to help guide a discussion about plant breeding innovations…

1. Embrace Skepticism

Many consumers in the non-science community are skeptical of plant breeding and have questions. Embrace that skepticism and take time to listen.

2. Acknowledge Concerns

Many consumers know little about plant breeding, what it is or how it works. Even worse, some have heard only bad things. Let them know you hear their concerns and want to answer their questions openly and honestly.

3. Share Personal Stories

Research shows consumers have strong trust in farmers. Share your personal stories from your farm.

4. Avoid Jargon + Technical Terms

Talk using accessible, plain language. As much as you may want to use accurate, scientific terminology, the average consumer may not know the term, hindering their understanding of your ideas.

5. Illustrate Ideas Using Examples and Analogies

When appropriate, use examples, analogies and metaphors to illustrate ideas in a more accessible, understandable way. Plant breeding innovations can help solve local problems, so share stories and examples of your local needs and solutions.

Show Your Passion!

Let the passion for what you do shine through. By sharing this passion, you will engage and excite listeners.