

# Real Progress: Golden rice holds key to alleviating vitamin A deficiency

*By ACSH Staff — April 29, 2011*

And now for some good agricultural news. The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) has [successfully engineered](#) <sup>[1]</sup> the world's first-ever vitamin A-rich rice. Using beta carotene-producing genes from corn, researchers were able to implant the gene into BRRI Dhan 29, the most productive rice variety found in Bangladesh.

Vitamin A deficiency is a serious global problem; one in five preschool children and almost twenty-five percent of women in Bangladesh suffer from the ailment. The new rice, called Golden Rice, will combat vitamin A deficiency, since consumption of just 150 grams of the rice daily will supply half of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin A for adults. Vitamin A deficiency is also the leading cause of preventable blindness in children, leading to about 350,000 cases of blindness worldwide each year while killing about 6,700 kids. Therefore, it's important that the new Golden Rice be approved quickly.

According to Alamgir Hossain, who worked with IRRI biotechnologists on developing the new rice, "We will be able to make our home-grown Golden Rice ready for seeking approval much ahead of 2015 if the government, particularly the regulators, take a proactive role in finishing the safety trial processes quickly."

"That's a big if," warns ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross. "This technology has been around for over ten years now, but progress has been thwarted by activist attacks against GM-food and governmental and regulatory over-precaution."

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[1] <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=182319>