



INTERNATIONAL FOOD
POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty

Nanotechnology, Food, Agriculture and Development

a few comments

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Nanoscale sciences: an evolving set of technologies

- **Many products on the market, but many more yet to come**
- **Large R& D investments in a number of developing countries**
- **Some applications in agriculture:**
 - Productivity/input side improvements: precision?
 - Quality of agricultural products (safety...)
 - Enhanced properties of derived products
- **Many others in environmental cleaning**

Issues arising with nanotech in agriculture

- **Economic risk: Complement or substitute for commodity based products?**
 - Nanotextile versus cotton
 - Nano rubber versus natural rubber
- **Potential risks of nanoparticle/nanotubes**
 - What regulations in developing countries?
- **IPR issues** with the use of broad patents
- **Ethical issues:** synthetic biology

Three policy directions

1. **More information exchange is needed between scientists and policy specialists**
2. **It is still time to direct public research toward high impact technologies for agricultural development**
3. **Risk management and regulations: lessons learned from biotech?**