**A Curious Display**

Amica and Ryden met at the local grocery store to shop for dinner food. Today, outside the store, there is a public information fair with many tents. One tent has a display and some posters.

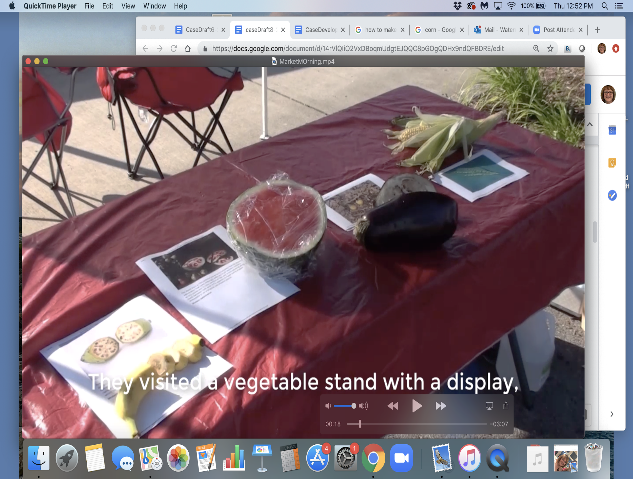
“Hey Ryden,” Amica said while looking at the display. “Did you see this! Look at this. Our food looks so different now.”

Fig 3. *Teosinte and modern corn comparison*

*Fig 2: Inside a wild-type banana*

Fig. 1. *Table display with pictures of wild vegetables and today’s vegetables*

“Wow! Look at the banana!” Ryden exclaimed. “And the corn!”

Luca was running the tent that day and turned to Ryden and Amica, “Good morning folks.”

“This display is amazing!” Amica said.

“Thanks,” Luca replied. “It’s all about the power of plant breeding.”

“What do you mean?” Ryden asked.

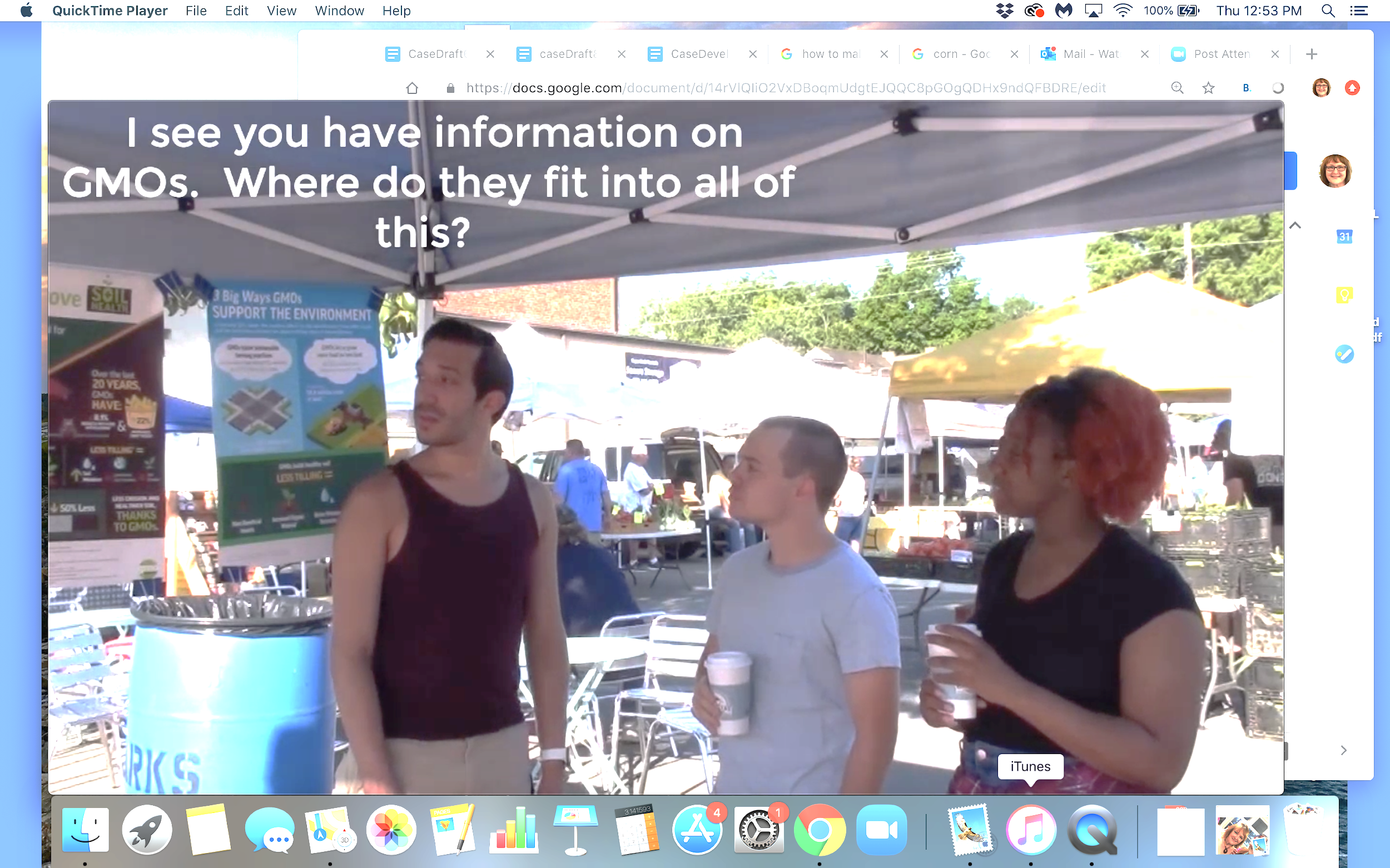


FIgure 4. *One vendor, Luca, and two visitors, Ryden and Amica, at the information fair*.

“Well, plant breeding is how people have been improving the plants we eat.” Luca explained. “We’ve been doing it for thousands of years - you know, choose the best ones and grow them to get better and better crops.”

“That makes sense,” Amica said. “I see you also have information on GMOs,” she said, pointing to the posters. “Where do they fit into plant breeding?”

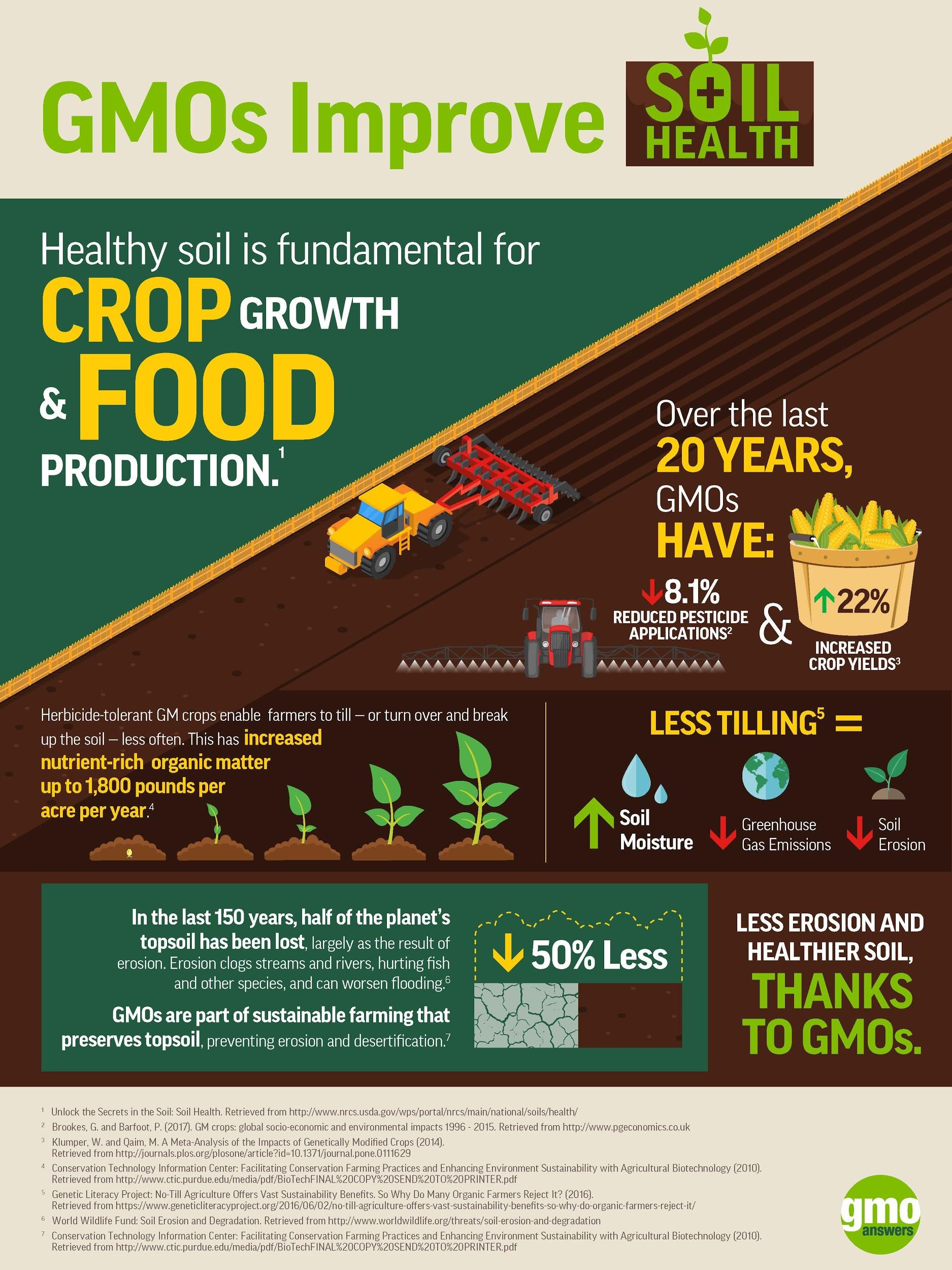
“So, all plant breeding changes the crop plant’s DNA,” Luca replied. “With GMOs, we use biotechnology to change the genes directly inside the cells. It’s a faster way to get better plants.”

“Oh, I’ve read about this. Like that corn you can spray with weed poison without killing it,” Ryden added.

Luca nodded.

Then Amica asked, “Are all of these vegetables in your display GMOs?”

“No,” Luca said. “Today only nine food crops are FDA-approved GMOs. The only GMO in this display is corn.”

Ryden pointed at one poster. “So how can GMOs be good for the environment?”

“Look,” Amica said, pointing at another poster, “this one shows they can save soil and lower greenhouse gases.”

“Yes. That one is about the way farmers work the soil,” Luca said.

“If the farmers use a GMO, like that corn you mentioned, then they can spray herbicides to control weeds instead of plowing so much. It’s called, ‘conservation tilling,’ because it saves fuel and the soil doesn’t wash away so much.”

“Oh, I see,” Amica said.

“It’s cool they know how to measure all this stuff,” Ryden added.

Amica and Ryden wrapped up the conversation, thanked Luca, and went on their way.

Fig. 5. *GMOs improve soil health* poster

As they walked into the grocery store, Ryden shook his head and said, “Well all this GMO stuff sounds great. But what does it mean if we’re spraying more weed killer right onto the plants we eat? Where is that chemical going?”

“It’s getting into our water,” Amica stated. “And I read on the internet that GMOs can cause allergies. Do you think that’s from the herbicide?”

“Don’t know. It seems like GMOs are good -- and bad.” Ryden responded, “What are we supposed to do with that?”

**Figure credits for A Curious Display.**

Fuller, N. (2009). *Teosinte and modern corn comparison.* [Photograph]. Retrieved from: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Teosinte_and_Modern_Corn_Comparison_(3745571067).jpg>

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Waterman, M. (2019). *One vendor and two visitors at the information fair.* [Screenshot].

Waterman, M. (2019). *Table display with pictures of wild vegetables and today’s vegetables.* [Screenshot].