

Current status of genetically modified crops in Iran and the world: Overview of production and consumption challenges

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Introduction

One of the most enduring and widely recognized patterns in ecology is the latitudinal diversity gradient (LDG)—the tendency for biodiversity to increase from the poles toward the equator. This phenomenon has been observed across a wide range of taxa, particularly among plants, animals, and microbial eukaryotes. However, the pattern is less consistent—and sometimes even reversed—among prokaryotic organisms such as bacteria and archaea. Understanding these contrasting trends offers critical insights into evolutionary processes, ecological dynamics, and global biodiversity conservation.

Microbial eukaryotes, including fungi, protists, and microalgae, generally conform to the LDG. Studies show that tropical soils and waters harbor greater diversity of fungal and protist species compared to temperate zones. For example, tropical rainforests support rich communities of mycorrhizal fungi, which play essential roles in nutrient cycling and plant symbiosis.

Tropical regions have experienced fewer glaciations, allowing uninterrupted speciation. Eukaryotic lineages may have had more time to diversify, whereas prokaryotes, with rapid generation times, can evolve quickly even in disturbed habitats.

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