

## Should GMOs be grown in national wildlife refuges?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife service did a huge disservice to science, wildlife and modern agriculture last month, when it banned the planting of genetically modified crops in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

“We make this decision based on a precautionary approach to our wildlife management practices,” wrote James Kurth, head of the refuge system, on July 17, according to the Associated Press.

Kurth’s “precautionary approach” raises an alarm: He’s not speaking the language of science or common sense, but rather adopting a bad phrase that has bedeviled Europe.

We don’t need it here. Our trade negotiators don’t need it either. Banning GM crops in certain areas is no way to persuade China, Japan, and other countries to accept our food exports.

It may seem odd that the chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System should feel the need to say anything at all about farming. Crops aren’t “wildlife” and a cultivated field is no “refuge.”

Kurth has introduced a new prejudice into America’s web of farming regulations. He has granted the presumption that GM crops are too novel, too mysterious, and too risky to allow their use in some of the country’s most pristine spaces. He can cite no actual science to back up his bias — but then, the “precautionary approach” never has been about science. It’s about emotion defeating reason and fear trumping evidence.

If Kurth believes that GM crops pose a threat, he should have the gumption to say so plainly and present his evidence — and not hide behind words like “precautionary.”

**Read full, original article:** [We do not need a precautionary approach for U.S. wildlife refuges](#)