

European public scientists urge Scotland to reverse ‘political’ GMO ban

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A powerful group of scientists and academic bodies has urged the Scottish government to rethink its [ban on growing GM crops](#), with a warning that it would damage farming, healthcare and scientific research. Nearly 30 organisations – including Edinburgh University, the Roslin Institute (where Dolly the sheep was cloned), the Eden Project, the National Farmers Union and the Science Council – have signed an open letter asking for an urgent meeting with Richard Lochhead, the Scottish environment secretary, to discuss the ban.

The open letter accused Lochhead of taking an openly political decision, not based on scientific advice or evidence. The signatories claimed that Scottish salmon farmers would miss out on enriched [GM](#) fishmeal, using plant-based omega-3 oils to cut impacts on wild fish stocks, or potatoes which would use less fungicide or were designed to withstand blight.

The letter’s signatories said: “By banning their use in Scotland, this country would be prevented from benefiting from future innovations in agriculture, fisheries and healthcare, and consigned to continued use of the old. We are thus extremely concerned about the potential negative effect on science in Scotland.”

In early August, Prof Muffy Calder, who stood down as Scotland’s chief scientific adviser in December but has not yet been replaced, [warned that the ban could have an “apocalyptic effect”](#) if a plant disease spread which Scottish crops were not protected against. “The ban seemed to be based on a perception of demand and fear of consumer backlash, not on any scientific evidence about GM crops themselves,” Calder said.

Read full, original post: [Science bodies urge Scottish government to rethink GM crops ban](#)