

Scottish official admits GMO ban based on marketing not science

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A controversial decision to ban the cultivation of GM crops in Scotland was not based on scientific evidence, Nicola Sturgeon has admitted. The First Minister said the move, took into account “potential wider economic ramifications” for the food and drink industry.

The ban took Scotland’s scientific community by surprise when it was announced by Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead.

It later emerged ministers were unable to consult the Scottish Government’s chief scientific adviser because the post has lain vacant since last year.

Ms Sturgeon was drawn into the row last week when she failed to clarify whether Professor Louise Heathwaite, the lead scientific adviser to Mr Lochhead’s rural affairs and environment department, had been consulted prior to the announcement.

She said Professor Heathwaite “was consulted on the scientific background that was made available to ministers prior to the decision.” but added: “That was not the primary factor in reaching the conclusion.”

She insisted the ban on growing GM crops in open fields would “not impact” on the work of research institutes in Scotland. She added: “The Scottish Government remains committed to drawing on the very best science advice and expertise.”

Mr Fraser said: “The SNP appears to be admitting this significant decision has not been made on scientific grounds.

“So if it hasn’t been made on scientific grounds, on what basis has it been made?

He added: “While this letter says the adviser was indeed informed, it doesn’t detail what the reaction was. Presumably, that omission tells its own story.”

Mr Lochhead was also asked what scientific evidence he considered prior to the ban, but he failed to cite a single example.

Read full, original post: [GM crops ban not based on scientific considerations, admits Sturgeon](#)