

Canada's regulation of new crops based on trait novelty, not process by which trait introduced

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Novel traits are used for a range of functions in crops across Canada – from heightened insect and disease resistance to improved agronomic performance.

According to Denis Schryburt, of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), novel traits can be introduced using conventional breeding methods, biotechnology or mutagenesis. Resulting products are evaluated by CFIA based on their performance. “The Canadian biotechnology regulatory system is based on the principle of novelty, meaning that products are regulated based on their characteristics and not by the process by which they were made,” Schryburt says.

The CFIA is responsible for assessing the safety of new products for release into the environment and use as livestock feed. Health Canada, on the other hand, assesses the product's safety for use as food.

“In the context of environmental release, we use the term ‘plant with novel traits’ to [describe] a plant that contains a trait that is both new to the Canadian environment and has the potential to affect the specific use and safety of the plant with respect to the environment and human health,” Schryburt explains.

For PNTs, the CFIA evaluates the potential of the plant to become a weed or to be invasive, the potential consequences of gene flow to wild relatives, the potential to increase the activity of a plant pest, the potential impact on non-target species and the potential impact on biodiversity.

Once safety evaluations have been completed for each PNT, the CFIA and Health Canada post documents outlining the rationale for the decision.

Read full, original post: [Introducing plants with novel traits](#)