

Inconsistent definitions of 'GMO' can lead to regulatory headaches

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

There are a few problems with how we define biotechnology in the United States that could lead to regulatory headaches.

1. Many different terms are used by different groups and agencies.
2. There are no really good definitions that everyone can point to.
3. Most definitions don't mention synthetic biology. There's an ongoing debate on whether synthetic biology really a separate thing or if it fits under the biotechnology umbrella.
4. Likewise, most definitions don't provide for newer technologies such as gene editing. Do they fit under the biotechnology umbrella?
5. Lastly, what counts as a GMO is subjective. What if researchers used newer breeding methods but the only change in the final organism was a deletion that could have happened through radiation mutagenesis? What about [crops with bacterial DNA](#) that arrived there through natural processes? Or crops whose genomes have [large amounts of ancient viral DNA](#)? What about [gene transfer that occurs along grafting sites](#)? Genetic engineering that uses [only genes from the same species](#), including [RNAi](#)? Biotechnologies are largely based on natural processes and nature doesn't care about fitting things into neat little boxes for the purposes of regulation.

The U.S. White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has an [open call for comments](#) on biotech regulation closing on 13 Nov 2015.

[We've made it easy for everyone to provide comments to the White House](#), and you can learn more at our post: [You can improve U.S. biotechnology regulation](#).

Read full, original post: [To regulate GMO we must define GMO](#)