

European researchers in limbo waiting for EU's decision on whether CRISPR plants are GMOs

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

Plant geneticist Stefan Jansson is champing at the bit to start field trials on crops tweaked with powerful gene-editing technologies. He plans to begin by using edits to study how the cress plant *Arabidopsis* protects its photosynthetic machinery from damage in excessively bright light.

But the future of his work depends on the European Commission's answer to a legal conundrum. Should it regulate a gene-edited plant that has no foreign DNA as a genetically modified (GM) organism?

Jansson, who works at Umeå University in Sweden, says that he will drop his experiments if the plants are classed as GM, because Europe's onerous regulations would make his work too expensive and slow. He and many others are anxiously awaiting the commission's decision, which will dictate how they approach experiments using the latest gene-editing techniques, including the [popular CRISPR–Cas9 method](#).

The commission has repeatedly stalled on delivering its verdict, which will apply to edited animals and microorganisms as well as plants. It now says that it will make its legal analysis public by the end of March. . .

Whatever the commission decides, it is likely that either a member state, an NGO or a company will sue — meaning that the European Court of Justice may make the final, binding decision on the matter.

Read full, original post: [Europe's genetically edited plants stuck in legal limbo](#)