

Will Britain fumble regulations on human and agricultural gene editing as it has on GMOs?

Britain has an opportunity to seize on the latest breakthroughs in gene editing and pioneer new approaches in agriculture, research and medicine.

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Twenty years ago, America was relaxed about genetic modification, whereas Britain was easily panicked by the green movement into nonsensical fears of “Frankenstein foods”. Today, it is the other way around. Hotted up by green campaigners who are aware of “climate fatigue” among their donors, Americans are increasingly torn over GMOs, despite decades of safe and environmentally beneficial experience of growing of them.

Genetically modified farm animals are especially problematic, stuck in what one researcher calls “regulatory purgatory” for 20 years, and one of the last acts of the Obama administration was to toughen the regulation of gene editing in animals as well. In effect, the government funds genetic modification and gene editing of animals and then does not allow them to be used.

In this country, by contrast, absence has made the heart grow fonder. In 2012 when Rothamsted Research grew GM crops experimentally, it [explained the reasons carefully](#) and cogently to the public in a series of videos, ably assisted by the ex-protester Mark Lynas among others, and the result was a small group of protesters, some of whom were French. This year, [when GM wheat was planted there](#), no protesters turned up at all.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Britain can lead the world in gene editing](#) (behind paywall)