

Spain expands GMO corn production by 20%, UK eyes gene editing

Four countries in the EU grew commercial genetically modified (GM) maize in 2016, with Spain adopting the largest area.

According to the latest figures from the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), Spain planted 129,081ha of Monsanto's pest-resistant maize (Bt maize) variety MON810 – a year-on-year increase of 20%.

Three other countries – Portugal (7,069ha), Slovakia (138ha) and the Czech Republic (75ha) grew the same variety.

Overall, it meant 19,493ha – an increase of 17% – of biotech maize was planted across the EU in 2016.

But the ISAAA said stringent reporting requirements resulted in fewer farmers growing GM maize in the Czech Republic. Likewise, in Romania where no farmers grew the crop.

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[T]he [UK] government is understood to be reviewing its position on biotech crops. Speaking at the Oxford Farming Conference, Defra secretary Michael Gove said biotech changes “would challenge us to think about the future, and the way we shape it”.

The minister said he was “open-minded” about the use of gene-editing, a technique which involves removing, replacing, or turning off specific genes to modify livestock and crops.

The ISAAA report criticised the “onerous regulation” for biotech crops that remains in many developing countries, including in Europe where farmers are denied access “despite the overwhelming evidence in support of the safe use of these technologies”.

Read full, original post: [GM crops area rises by 20% in Spain](#)