CRISPR gene editing and other New Breeding Techniques (NBTs) face opposition from organic industry

Can organic and non-GMO agriculture offer innovative, tech-based solutions for our food system – or does hope lie in new plant breeding techniques?

“Innovation in food and farming doesn’t implicitly mean GM techniques and agrichemicals,” according to Honor Eldridge, policy officer at the UK’s organic certification board Soil Association.

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The organic sector argues that organic farming methods is capable of feeding the world.

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This view is not shared by everyone, however, and many put their faith in NPBTs, such as precision breeding and CRISPR-Cas gene-editing.

Proponents of new plant breeding techniques (NPBTs) argue that they work with native traits in crops and, because they do not introduce new genes to the plant, are comparable to traditional plant breeding techniques.

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In any case, the position of the organic movement is clear. “All new genetic engineering techniques should be, without question, considered as techniques of genetic modification and […] all products produced using gene-editing techniques have to remain traceable, labelled, subject to a risk assessment and to the precautionary principle,” said Elridge.

Europe’s leading biotechnology lobby group EuropaBio, however, says genome editing in crops can be even safer than traditional breeding techniques, resulting in fewer unintended effects.

Read full, original post: Does plant breeding rival organic and non-GMO as solutions for future food systems?