Viewpoint: US, EU decisions pave way for ‘more consistent and rational’ regulation of gene-edited foods

Genome engineering using CRISPR–Cas9 technology has come a long way in a very short time. … Now, CRISPR–Cas9 has passed another milestone with the decision by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to clear a crop developed using CRISPR for commercial growth without regulation as a genetically modified organism (GMO).

[Editor’s note: The post is part of an editorial by the journal Nature Plants]

…

The United States takes an essentially functional view of GMOs, not concerning itself with the technologies that created the animals or plants but rather what the effects of the manipulations have been.

…

[Michel Bobek, Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union, recently reached] the opinion that “an organism obtained by mutagenesis can be a GMO” if it is altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination.
…

This will not be the end of the debate. Bobek was asked to address the question in the first place at the behest of nine French, non-governmental organizations opposed to GMOs who presumably hoped to restrict the mutagenesis exemption to pre-2001 technologies. However, with the USDA decision and Bobek’s opinion it seems that legislatures on both sides of the Atlantic may be edging towards a more consistent and rational approach to modern genomic engineering.

Read full, original post: A CRISPR definition of genetic modification