

## Japan's 'moderate' regulation proposal could spur development of gene-edited crops

A health ministry panel said [December 5] that most of the foods currently under development using genome editing can be marketed without safety screening by the state, a proposal that would accelerate the creation of such items as more nutritious tomatoes and more meaty red seabream in Japan.

The relatively moderate regulation would allow companies to sell gene-edited foods only by providing the government with information on specific genome engineering, or which DNA is snipped or tweaked in crops or animals.

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Based on the panel's report, the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry plans to draw its own conclusion on the matter by the end of March.

Compared with traditional breed improvement techniques, which usually require a decade or more to create new crops through cross breeding or by applying chemicals and radiation to DNA, the gene-editing techniques can deliver results in a much shorter period of time.

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Meanwhile, out of safety concerns, consumer groups have been calling for the implementation of mandatory safety assessment for gene-edited foods, but the panel determined those foods, with which specific genes are inactivated through gene-editing, cannot be distinguished from foods produced by conventional improvement techniques.

It also concluded that such inactivation of genes can occur naturally through mutations, among other things, and those gene-edited foods should be outside of current regulations for genetically modified foods.

**Read full, original article:** [Japan may boost gene-edited foods development](#)