

Prime Minister Boris Johnson: Time to 'liberate' UK farming from EU's anti-GMO rules

boris johnson mp
Image: Boris
Johnson

In his first prime ministerial speech [July 24], Boris Johnson called for a “liberation” of the U.K.’s bioscience sector after leaving the EU. But he downplayed farmers’ concerns about the disruptive impacts that could be felt across the country’s agriculture sector by crashing out of the EU without a deal. “Let’s start now to liberate the U.K.’s extraordinary bioscience sector from anti-genetic modification rules and let’s develop the blight-resistant crops that will feed the world,” Johnson said.

Johnson’s comments will be welcomed by many in the bioscience sector, who have felt held back by Europe’s relatively stringent hazard-based rule-making. Equally, they will leave environmentalists grimacing at the prospect of more herbicide-resistant crops, rises in pesticides use, and the inevitable court battles over their health effects.

.... In the event of a no-deal Brexit, Johnson declared that “our amazing food and farming sector will be ready and waiting to continue selling evermore, not just here but around the world.” This may leave some farmers puzzled, as the day before, the National Farmers Union leader Minette Batters called on Johnson “to leave the EU in a smooth and orderly way.”

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