FDA v USDA v EPA: US agencies vie for role in revised animal and crop biotechnology regulations

On June 11, President Donald Trump signed an executive order that would set in motion a review by three federal agencies the United States agricultural biotechnology regulation process…and create guidance documents in six months.

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“It’s not a question if these agencies have the authority to regulate. The question is if they can cooperate here without their jurisdictions overlapping.” said Stan Abramson, counsel at the Arent Fox law firm in Washington, D.C.

…

EPA is approaching this executive order with the intent that regulatory decisions be based on risks assessments and using existing statutory authority as approval to remove undue regulations to getting products to the marketplace in a timely fashion.

…

“The FDA looks at food safety of the products derived from these new varieties of plants and animals,” explained [Laura Epstein, senior policy advisor in the Office of the Center Director at FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine]. Now, at question are animals that are engineered for some specific trait.

…

Today the science is CRISPR, but tomorrow it may be base editing, and the day after something else that we have yet to discover, [Fan-Li Chou, is biology coordinator in the USDA Office of Pest Management Policy] said. … “In 30 years, we have looked at every single glyphosate resistant soybean that’s been put on the market, and not one has ever shown a single risk,” she said. “Is it a good use of our scientists? Of our taxpayer money to keep doing this? We think not.”

[Editor’s note: The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s request for feedback to proposed updates for biotechnology regulation, released in June, closed at midnight August 5.]

Read full, original article: 3 federal agencies ponder the new biotech regulatory regime