

CRISPR-edited crops could go on sale in Japan before end of 2019

Food products produced using genome editing technology could go on sale in Japan by the end of the year despite no specific labelling rules being in place. The Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) announced that foods made using the genome editing technology do not require safety inspections, unlike genetically modified foods which must go through toxicity and carcinogenicity tests. Declaration of the technology used is also not required on the product label.

Japan is no stranger to genetically-modified foods, which already follows a set of labelling regulations and safety tests. It can include foods made using recombinant DNA technology, which is the combination of genetic information from different species. According to Japan's Food Labeling Standard, foods made using this technology are required to declare genetically modified if the main ingredient is derived from recombinant DNA technology such as soybean, corn, potato, rape, cotton seed, alfalfa, sugar beet, and papaya.

On the other hand, genome editing technology allows the cutting and splicing of DNA to edit target genes. This technology was said to dramatically speed up crop development time. According to Hiroyuki Kawai, CEO of Japan-based consultancy firm Label Bank: The benefit (of genome editing technology) is shortening the time needed for development

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