

UK environment secretary backs relaxed CRISPR crop rules, but says GMO restrictions won't change

Addressing MPs via video call, [UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, George Eustice] said that “gene editing is an area that we ought to be considering if we want to reduce our reliance to pesticides,” highlighting that improved genetic resistance will be important for pest and disease challenges.

He stated that the UK government thinks “gene editing techniques like CRISPR are really a more targeted form of conventional plant breeding, allowing to move or modify a particular gene within a certain species,” adding that he considered some of these techniques as “an extension of conventional plant breeding,”

However, he was careful to specify the distinction between genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and gene-editing technologies, saying that he would not look to change the regulatory framework on GMOs.

He added that he wasn't sure that it was “appropriate” to regulate GMOs and gene-edited organisms the same way, diverging from the EU's stance on the issue.

The remarks came in response to a letter sent by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on science and technology in agriculture to Eustice earlier this month urging the government to introduce an amendment to the Bill in the House of Lords, the UK's upper house, in order to boost genetic innovation after Brexit.

[Read the original post](#)