

EPA may relax rules on some pest-resistant crops to promote 'science-based' regulation

The Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to exempt from its regulation some biotech crops that are genetically engineered to be toxic to damaging insects and other plant pests.

The agency's proposal follows implementation of [a broader rule finalized by the Agriculture Department in May](#) to streamline its oversight of biotech plants.

EPA, which shares regulation of agricultural biotechnology with USDA and the Food and Drug Administration, must approve the commercialization of plants that are engineered to have pesticidal properties, formally known as "plant-incorporated pesticides."

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Under [a proposed rule](#) released [September 1], biotech crops engineered to contain pesticidal substances would be exempt from EPA regulation if they could have been produced through conventional breeding and pose no greater risk than crops that meet the agency's safety requirements.

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"Embracing this technology through a transparent, consistent and science-based process is long overdue, and will secure benefits to American agriculture well into the future," [said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler.]

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