

Europe could become an ‘agricultural museum’ unless it embraces crop gene editing, officials warn

Speaking during the AGRI Committee debate, right-wing MEP Mazaly Aguilar raised a concern that, by imposing new restrictions on the agricultural sector without offering new opportunities, the EU risks becoming an “agricultural museum”.

Due to outdated and restrictive approaches, she added, there is a “bottleneck” for certain types of innovation, such as innovative approaches to genetic engineering.

Likewise, socialist MEP Juozas Olekas highlighted that Europe is “really lagging behind the rest of the world” when it comes to plant breeding innovations.

Stakeholders also raised the need for innovation in a range of other areas, including animal husbandry and innovative solutions to save on natural resources such as water and soil nutrients.

Renew Europe’s Adrián Vaquez Lazara highlighted that there is a gap between the Farm to Fork ambitions and the reality on the ground, querying whether the strategy includes sufficient tools to ensure that the primary sector can achieve the necessary technological transition.

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In response, Yvonne Colomer, executive director of the Triptolemos Foundation in Spain, which works towards the creation of a sustainable global food system, stressed that the EU “cannot miss the boat”.

“We cannot afford to fall behind. We will regret it if we do. And we’ll see it will have huge economic consequences,” she warned.

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