

UK relaxing restrictions on testing CRISPR gene-edited crops

Law changes later this year will make it easier to run field trials in England on crops that are gene-edited for environmental and nutritional benefits.

The UK government, which announced the move [September 28], also said it plans future legislation so gene-edited crops and livestock that mimic the effects of natural breeding are treated differently to genetically modified (GM) ones, a step that would pave the way to gene-edited food being sold in UK supermarkets for the first time.

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The government will lift the licensing hurdles that laboratories face when starting a field trial of gene-edited crops, a crucial exercise to see how well they grow in more realistic conditions.

The change in England, to be undertaken using secondary legislation before the year is out, should save about £10,000 per trial and cut a two month wait before trials can begin.

[Wendy Harwood](#) at the John Innes Centre in Norwich, UK, says: "We're hoping it will make it easier to have a look at these plants in the field, which will enable scientists to identify which ones to take forward."

However, researchers will still have to notify the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and Scotland and the rest of the UK may decide different rules.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)