

Viewpoint: England's 'half-hearted' support for gene editing is stifling innovation

The [UK] Government's half-hearted support for the process is denying us a huge chance to progress.

The Government wants to unleash innovation. If it were to be presented with a magic wand that could by 2040 feed millions more people, avoid tens of millions of tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and improve biodiversity on hundreds of thousands of hectares, while benefiting the economy and reducing the footprint of farming, it would surely grab it.

That is exactly what Crispr and other gene editing technologies promise for agriculture, based on what they are doing elsewhere. Yet the Government's first moves towards allowing gene editing, now that we are free from the EU's stifling restrictions on it, while welcome, are frustratingly hesitant.

Crispr will be encouraged, according to plans released [recently], but only at first in plants and not animals.

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Britain pioneered a lot of plant and animal science, it has a first-class plant-variety licensing system with a perfect record of safety and it led the way in developing much plant and animal biotechnology, but it has since had to watch the rest of the world commercialise the work and reap the rewards.

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