

With war raging in the Ukraine, UK farmers reconsider GM crops to meet growing yield and sustainability demands

[A]s the world grapples with the impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, "it has actually become pretty frightening times for farmers", says Hertfordshire-based farmer Stephen Roberts.

"Food security has been an unfashionable topic for a long time," he adds. "But now, we really cannot allow anyone to take their eye off the importance of an island nation being able to feed itself and we need to be looking at any technology that [can make us more resource-efficient in farming](#)."

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

New technologies could make Britain less tied into the global system. The UK relied on Ukraine for \$177.5m worth of cereal imports in 2021, and on Russia for \$21m worth. Becoming more self-sufficient is all the more important as global prices of grains such as wheat have shot up as much as 66pc over the past year.

Professor Nigel Halford from the Rothamsted Research Institute says there is a potential for gene editing and GM which would require less water, fertiliser and land.

"Gene editing is something which we ought to be using as much as we can because there are so many challenges facing food production," he says. "Not just Ukraine, but also climate change, soil degradation and freshwater availability."

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