

Viewpoint: Britain's deregulation of agricultural gene editing a good first step — but further reform needed

Britain's deregulatory plans around GMO crops [focus](#) on gene editing, a type of genetic modification that "is heavily restricted in the EU." Indeed, current European Union [rules](#) "make gene editing for crops and livestock almost impossible."

Britain's embrace of gene editing in agriculture places more post-Brexit distance between it and the E.U. That's intentional. Indeed, the British government this week [couches](#) its GMO plans as part of its overall goal to "deliver on the promise of Brexit."

It's also a good thing. As I explained in a 2019 [column](#), the E.U.'s anti-GMO rules are ridiculously bad.

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It is the former [gene editing], rather than the latter [genetic modification], that Britain is moving to allow. That has some critics questioning the scope of regulatory reform and pace of scientific progress.

For example, while hailing the loosening of restrictions, the [Observer editorial](#) also noted the scope of reform is narrow and "unsatisfactory." They urge Britain to overcome its "misguided government thinking" and allow the introduction of other GMO crops and foods—not just those created by gene editing.

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Britain's got a long way to go to establish fair and sensible GMO regulations. But unlike the rest of Europe, Britain's growing embrace of genetic modification and science puts it on the right path.

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