

Viewpoint: New Zealand's ban on GMOs and gene editing aligns it with Europe — but is out of step with science and its citizens

Attitudes [about GMOs] within New Zealand appear to be slightly shifting towards being more liberal. Surveys [conducted between](#) 2000 – 2009 were generally negative over the board.

However, more recent surveys have shown that while there are still negative attitudes to GMOs in the food chain, where they can be shown to benefit human health then there is growing tolerance. This level of tolerance also depends upon the level of the 'modification'. Much of the reason for the negative attitudes stem from distrust of the 'safety' claims and ethical concerns regarding the modifications.

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There is [also a strong feeling](#) in sectors that New Zealand's safe food image could/would be diminished by introducing GMO's into our food chain. However, a [Plant and Food paper](#) found that a 'panel' they conducted research with could see some benefits. A range of potential applications were identified including preservation of endangered species of plants and animals, new health related therapies, protecting biodiversity, creating health and food security, sequencing of rare threatened and endangered endemic species (and their medical chemotypes), human health, environmental restoration, sustainable enterprise, pest control, and pest eradication.

A 2019 [study showed](#) that two-thirds of Kiwi's believe it is safe to eat with less than one third saying it shouldn't be sold in New Zealand.

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