

‘Gene editing is a unique tool for improving animal welfare’ — UK debate over whether CRISPR regulations should be relaxed

Legislation that could pave the way to relax restrictions on gene editing in animals is making its way through the [UK] law-making process.

The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill was outlined in The Queen’s speech on 10 May, forming a timely backdrop to a gene editing debate at the Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF) discussion forum a stone’s throw from Parliament the following day.

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Madeleine Campbell, specialist in equine reproduction and European diplomate in animal welfare science, ethics and law, argued that the technology is a “unique tool for improving animal welfare”.

She added that it is a more selective tool to give much more specific and predictable results than selective breeding.

“For me, far from compromising animal welfare, gene editing should be used to enhance it,” she said.

“Further than that, I would argue it can be considered an ethical imperative that we should make use of it.”

...

The legislation, if passed, would first apply only to plants. Its intention is to “cut unnecessary red tape for gene editing, helping our farmers to grow more resistant, nutritious and productive crops”. There would be further hoops to jump through before it could be permitted commercially in livestock.

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