

Viewpoint: 'Biotech and organic can exist side by side' — Professors and scientists support New Zealand's potential gene-editing turnabout

Decades on from mass public protests, a royal commission, midnight raids on crop trials, [potential lab leaks](#) and the [infamous Corngate scandal](#), some scientists are welcoming a push from the National Party to relax regulations on genetic modification.

The [party released policy on \[June 11\]](#) saying it would reverse the ban and introduce a new biotech regulator, if elected in October.

University of Auckland biological sciences Professor Andrew Allan said he hoped the [revival of public discussion](#) on the issue would lead to a “science-based decision, not a knee-jerk emotional response”, regardless of who won the election.

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[Allan] did not think contamination was inevitable, pointing to the co-existence of “a massive organic sector and a massive GM sector” in North America.

Genetically modified food accounted for 15% of world agricultural value, and came into New Zealand in processed food, “but we’ve captured none of the value we could have had from it”, he said.

He dismissed concerns about hurting New Zealand’s “clean green image”, saying there was “no evidence” Australia’s image as an exporter of very good wine was damaged by the fact it allowed gene editing in the field.

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