

Green advocates claim ‘precision-breeding’ is a Trojan horse marketing technique to get ‘dangerous’ CRISPR crops approved. What do the facts say?

In the [United States](#), you’ll be able to taste modified mushrooms [that do not blacken when cut](#). In Japan, [tomatoes produce fewer enzymes](#) to improve sleep quality and reduce stress. Other similar ideas are in the works, [such as](#) potatoes that do not produce acrylamide, a carcinogen.

Several examples show that the experiments around CRISPR are very variable, with sometimes quite anecdotal attempts to modify a [food](#). “The technology is very inexpensive,” deciphers Pierre Barret, director of research at the National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment ([Inrae](#)).

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Despite this apparent simplicity, the concept can be scary: are we ready to consume products whose DNA [has](#) been artificially modified? [This is a question](#) that recalls the debates around [genetically modified organisms](#) (GMOs). However, technology has nothing to do with it. “What was scary about GMOs was the idea of ??transgression,” summarizes Pierre Barret. This is more an ethical question than a scientifically based fear. But including rabbit genes in a tomato, for example, goes against nature, it’s not “normal”. There is none of that in Crispr.”

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And this progress is made with the same opposition as those surrounding GMOs... [Natalie Bennett](#), former leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, [denounced a giveaway to big business farming](#): “The problem starts with the term ‘precision breeding’. It’s a marketing slogan, not a technical and legal reality.”

[Editor’s note: This article has been translated from French and edited for clarity.]

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