

Viewpoint: European Union's proposed crop gene-editing deregulation plan still falls short

The European Court of Justice (CJEU) on 25 July 2018 stated that all products modified by genetic engineering with New Genomic Techniques (NGTs) developed after 2001 must be regulated as GMOs without any exception.

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The new European regulation proposal distinguishes between two cases:

– **NGT-1 plants**, which the new regulation classifies as equivalent to conventional plants.

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– **NGT-2 plants**, which have also been modified using NGTs but whose modifications do not meet the criteria for the NGT-1 category.

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The proposed project is confined to deregulating the genomic modifications of plant products produced by NGTs which could also be obtained by natural mutation or conventional selection. But since number of NGT-1 products are indistinguishable from conventional products, why should they be subject to a special notification procedure, with a "NGT-1 category" entry in a specific database?

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Why not apply to NGT products this single procedure that has been implemented for almost a century without any incident? In Canada, the regulations applied to new products are based on this approach: they assess the characteristics of the finished product and the quality of the product independently of the method of production: traditional crossbreeding, transgenesis (GMOs) or NGTs, through the *Novel Foods* regulation.

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