

Viewpoint: UK's Royal Society advances agro-biotechnology regulatory reforms to stir innovation and reduce influence of large seed companies

The UK needs an evidence-led and proportionate regulatory approach for genetically modified (GM) crops to realise the technology's benefits for human health, agriculture and the environment, according to a new Royal Society policy [briefing](#).

The [Enabling genetic technologies for food security](#) briefing, led by Professor Jonathan Jones FRS, Group Leader at The Sainsbury Laboratory, Norwich, sets out recent developments in using the GM method for crop improvement.

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Earlier this year, the UK government has already sought to reduce regulatory barriers to genetic innovation for agriculture by passing the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act, which introduced a new framework in England for regulating crops that were gene edited.

However, the Act left GM crops under a regulatory regime inherited from the EU which has usually required extensive scientific and safety trials. Satisfying these requirements is so expensive that only the largest companies can achieve regulatory approval.

[The Royal Society briefing](#) argues this approach is no longer justified given the evidence from 30 years of commercial use that crops developed with GM methods are no more likely to pose unpredictable risks than crops resulting from other breeding technologies. Instead, regulation should focus on assessing scientifically plausible risks given what is known about the GM trait and the species it was introduced into.

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