

USDA further liberalizes rules to allow easy approval of more gene-edited crops

Biotech plant developers are pleased with a proposal from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to create five new regulatory exemptions for genetically modified plants.

The industry has expressed concern that the U.S. has been falling behind internationally as other countries move toward adopting regulations more favorable to gene-edited crops.

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One of the five proposed exemptions would be for "plants with up to four modifications made simultaneously or sequentially, provided that each modification individually qualifies for exemption and is at a different genetic locus."

USDA regulations finalized in 2020 allow "some gene-edited products to be exempt, a status that can be confirmed," Jenkins and others said in a paper in *Nature Plants* this year. However, the exemption "is only for a very narrow subset (for example, single edit in a diploid or haplotype), causing most gene-edited plants to go through the same Regulatory Status Review process as traditional transgenic crops."

Going from a single edit to four is an improvement, [\[Dan\] Jenkins](#) said, adding, "I really believe that USDA will continue to make adjustments for broadening what could be exempt as they build a record."

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