

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES

DEFRA CONSULTATION ON THE REGULATION OF GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES

Issue

Members are invited to consider and provide feedback on the response to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs consultation on the regulation of genetic technologies.

Background

1. Defra have started a public consultation period of three months from the 7th January 2021 to the 17th March 2021. The consultation focuses on organisms produced through genome editing or other genetic technologies that are equivalent to those that could have been produced through conventional breeding methods.
2. Defra's view is that organisms produced by GE or by other genetic technologies should not be regulated as GMOs if they could have been produced by conventional breeding methods. Leaving the EU provides an opportunity to consult on the implications of addressing this issue.
3. At the January ACNFP meeting, the ACNFP discussed whether the committee would provide a response to the genetic technologies and if so which questions. The Committee agreed to the formation of a GM working group and agreed that the ACNFP would provide comment on the questions in part 1 of the consultation only.
4. The GM working group was formed of five members, two ACNFP members, two members of the Committee on Toxicology and one member from the Register of Specialists who joined the working group as an animal GM expert.
5. The GM working group met twice in February to discuss the consultation response with drafting via email in between.
6. The secretariat would like to thank the members of the GM working group, for their work in producing this response.

The consultation

1. The consultation comprises of two parts, and can be found at <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/agri-food-chain-directorate/the-regulation-of-genetic-technologies/>
2. Part 1 focuses on the regulation of genome edited organisms possessing genetic changes which could have been introduced by conventional breeding. The results of which may influence amendments to the definition of a genetically

modified organism in England. This could mean that organisms produced by genome editing and other genetic technologies where the resultant organism is equivalent to those which could have been produced through conventional breeding are not considered GM in future.

Committee Action Required

- Members are invited to comment on the genetic technologies consultation response drafted by the GM working group.

**Secretariat
February 2021**

Annex A. GM working group consultation response