



Opinion

European Plant Science Organisation
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Welcoming the Advice on genome-edited Camelina plants by the British Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE)

Brussels, 25.5.2018

The European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO) welcomes the Advice of the British Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) on genome-edited camelina plants with increased levels of oleic acid.

The advice states that the lines in question, which are genome-edited crops, and more precisely genome-edited camelina plants with increased levels of oleic acid, **are null segregants** in which DNA from the CRISPR-Cas9 transformation vector is no longer present and that **“it would not be possible to determine whether these lines had been produced by genome-editing or by traditional mutagenesis** because they would be genetically indistinguishable.” Traditional mutagenesis is covered by a “mutagenesis exemption” from EU regulations that restrict the release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Based on this advice the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) considers that the genome-edited camelina plants are not captured by GMO legislation and can be grown in UK field trials at Rothamsted Research in the near future. This decision is in line with policies in place in certain non-European countries, for example USDA in the United States

This opinion was developed by Peter Rogowsky and Ralf Wilhelm, based on the discussion of the EPSO Agricultural Technology Working Group at its meeting in May 2018 and the EPSO General Meeting 2017.

Contacts

Peter Rogowsky
INRA, FR EPSO
T: +33-4-72728607
peter.rogowsky@ens-lyon.fr

Ralf Wilhelm
Julius Kühn-Institute (JKI), DE
T: +493946-47550
Ralf.Wilhelm@julius-kuehn.de

EPSO Office
T: +32-22136260
epsos@epsomail.org

Useful links

- o Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) Advice on ‘genome-edited Camelina plants with increased levels of oleic acid’ to the Secretary of State under S.124 of

the Environmental Protection Act 1990, 18.5.2018:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708560/gmo-camelina-oleic-acre-advice.pdf

- Rothamsted Research announces one of the world's first field trials on a genome-edited crop, on genome-edited camelina plants with increased levels of oleic acid, which 'will improve our understanding of lipid metabolism' (Jonathan Napier), 18.5.2018: www.rothamsted.ac.uk/news/where-gm-meets-ge
- EPSO Updated Statement: Crop Genetic Improvement Technologies, 12.01.2017 www.epsoweb.org/webfm_send/2263
- EPSO
EPSO science advice to policy – e.g. on agricultural technologies: www.epsoweb.org/agricultural-technologies-wogr
EPSO breaking news: www.epsoweb.org
EPSO publications: www.epsoweb.org/archive-epsoweb-publications-and-statements?981448774=1
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About EPSO

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents more than 200 research institutes, departments and universities from 30 countries, mainly from Europe, and 3.300 individuals Personal Members, representing over 26 000 people working in plant science. EPSO's mission is to improve the impact and visibility of plant science in Europe, to provide authoritative source of independent information on plant science including science advice to policy, and to promote training of plant scientists to meet the 21st century challenges in breeding, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, plant ecology and sectors related to plant science. www.epsoweb.org | EU Transparency Register Number 38511867304-09