

Trump Administration Wants To Relax Rules on GMO Crops

The Trump administration wants to exempt many new genetically engineered crops from regulation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Trump wants it to be easier for genetically engineered plants and animals to enter the food supply. He signed an executive order on June 11th to have federal agencies simplify the “regulatory maze” for genetically modified food producers.

The administration says it wants to cut the cost of genetically modified crop development and exempt crops that have similar traits to plants that could be produced through hybridization (traditional plant breeding). GMO companies would be allowed to determine if their products are exempt from regulation.

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The administration argues the approach will allow regulators to focus on ‘increasingly complex products which, in turn, may pose new types of risks.’ “

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Crops produced with the newer gene-editing technologies wouldn't automatically be subject to special oversight under the proposed rule. GMO companies say gene-editing makes it so that they can easily and more precisely alter the DNA of plants and animals, and that these changes to the DNA could be done with conventional breeding techniques.

Jaydee Hanson of the Center for Food Safety warns that these new gene editing techniques can make significant changes, “including those that would never happen in nature,” and says that the companies need oversight.

The proposed rules are open for public comment through Aug. 5 before the department issues a final regulation.

The Trump Administration has been friendly to companies like Bayer (formerly Monsanto) in the past. In 2019 Trump's administration lifted Obama's ban on GMOs and bee-killing chemicals in wildlife refuges.