

# Scotland, Wales Won't Follow UK Westminster Government on Gene Editing Deregulation

Both will follow the EU instead

By [GMWatch](#)

Global Research, October 04, 2021  
[GMWatch](#) 2 October 2021

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#), [Law and Justice](#)

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the “Translate Website” drop down menu on the top banner of our home page (Desktop version).

Visit and follow us on Instagram at [@crg\\_globalresearch](#).

\*\*\*

*Although **Boris Johnson** has [pledged](#) to “liberate” the UK from “anti-GM rules” by ditching the European Union’s precautionary stance, it’s important to understand that the deregulatory moves his government has just announced on gene-edited crops apply to England, and England alone.*

That’s because, as the BBC reports below, “the issue is devolved and governments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland can make their own decision”, and to date every part of the UK with a devolved administration has opposed any growing of GM crops on their territory.

And in response to the Westminster government’s new policy announcement, Scotland and Wales have made it crystal clear that they have absolutely no intention of following England’s unilateral move to deregulate the gene editing of crop plants. Given Northern Ireland has effectively remained within the EU’s single market for goods, it’s almost impossible to see how it could follow England’s unilateral move either.

It’s also worth noting that a majority of people in Scotland and Northern Ireland voted against Brexit and the devolved administrations in both Scotland and Wales are strongly opposed to Boris Johnson’s Tory Party. And, of course, the public consultation on deregulation showed it was highly unpopular among individuals and businesses UK-wide.

That, of course, isn’t the end of the story, because the deregulation of gene editing is a globally coordinated campaign by lobbyists and so there is pressure on the EU to loosen its regulations on gene editing. The EU Commission has begun a process to review its regulatory framework in that light. But there is a lot of anti-GM sentiment in many parts of the EU, as well as in the European Parliament, so despite all the lobbying, the Commission is likely to have a tough fight on its hands to get any deregulatory moves accepted.

## 1. Disappointment at Defra’s ‘unilateral’ move on gene editing

By The Newsroom

[The Scotsman, 29 Sept 2021](#)

[excerpt only]

After weeks of build-up and hints of major changes to the UK's regulatory framework on the use of gene editing breeding techniques, Westminster will today reveal that its plans will currently be limited to research and development.

However, the Scottish Government, which has previously stated its reservations on the commercialisation of such technology, expressed disappointment at England's unilateral move on the issue, stating that it would continue to engage with Defra, Wales, and Northern Ireland to ensure that devolved competences were respected in charting the country's future direction.

[...]

Commenting recently on the issue, the Scottish government's environment minister, Màiri McAllan said: "Scotland's policy towards GMOs has not changed, and we have no plans for a similar review.

"As for gene-editing, we are disappointed Defra would choose to move unilaterally on this...the Scottish Government is committed to keeping aligned with the EU, and we are monitoring the EU's position closely."

## **2. Gene-edited crops: 'No plans' to relax rules in Wales**

[BBC News, 30 Sept 2021](#)

[excerpt only]

There are no plans to relax the regulation of gene-edited crops in Wales, the Welsh government has said.

Under UK government plans rules will be eased to allow gene-edited crops to be tested and assessed in England in the same way as other varieties.

But the Welsh government says it will maintain its "precautionary approach towards genetic modification".

It will continue to view products produced by gene editing as genetic modified, it said. The changes are possible because the UK no longer has to follow European Union regulations.

But the issue is devolved and governments in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland can make their own decision.

[...]

European Union regulations require that gene-edited crops are treated the same as genetically-modified crops.

The Welsh government say they have no plans to revise the regulations.

“Unlike the UK government, we will continue to view products produced by gene editing as genetically modified as set out by the European Court of Justice in 2018,” a spokeswoman said.

\*

Note to readers: Please click the share buttons above or below. Follow us on Instagram, @crg\_globalresearch. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

*Featured image is from GMWatch*

The original source of this article is [GMWatch](#)

Copyright © [GMWatch](#), [GMWatch](#), 2021

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [GMWatch](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)  
[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)