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Views on new technologies for genome editing

The current technique-based legislation on genetically modified organisms (GMO) is challenged by technical advances that have been realised over the last two decades and will increasingly be challenged as the technical development progresses.

The current situation with legal uncertainty as to what falls within the GMO legal framework has already been tested in practise concerning field trials in Sweden. According to common law practice, the Swedish Board of Agriculture has given guidance to the company or person posing questions pertaining to the need to go through the GMO pathway for field trials or not. It would be inappropriate for the Board to withhold guidance in these situations.

In general, the legal system should be proportionate to possible risks of the products, handled on a case-by case basis and not hinder innovation or place excessive financial burden on small or medium sized enterprises.

In conclusion, the legal framework for GMO is not appropriate for handling some of the new genome-editing techniques.

We are looking forward to coming discussions regarding this issue and hope they will start promptly.

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