



## All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture

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### **Cross-party group welcomes FSA plans for more proportionate regulatory approach on precision bred food and feed products**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture has welcomed the progress made at today's Food Standards Agency (FSA) Board meeting towards a more streamlined regulatory approval process for food and feed products developed using precision breeding techniques such as gene editing.

The Group's chair, Julian Sturdy MP, said the FSA's proposals were in line with the progressive regulatory approaches applied in other countries such as Canada, Argentina and Japan, and could pave the way for England to take a leading position in the research, development and commercialisation of precision bred products.

"The All-Party Group first led the way in calling for new precision breeding techniques such as gene editing to be removed from the scope of restrictive GMO rules inherited from the EU. A milestone was reached in March this year with the passing into law of the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act. Streamlining the approval process to be applied under the Act to precision bred food and feed products is an important next step towards unlocking the enormous potential of these technologies for more sustainable, productive and climate resilient agriculture," he said.

Mr Sturdy also welcomed the fact that the Food Standards Agency had taken stock of the scientific evidence in developing its approach.

"Until recently, there were serious concerns that the FSA was proposing to establish a regulatory process for precision bred food and feed products similar to that currently applied to GMOs and novel foods, potentially involving expert committee scrutiny, risk assessment, public consultation, Parliamentary approval and Secretary of State sign-off for each application.

"Many people within the scientific and breeding communities, as well as others including this APPG, worked hard to present evidence to the FSA regarding the overwhelming scientific consensus that the products of precision breeding

pose no greater risks than products obtained through conventional breeding methods.

“On this occasion it is encouraging that the evidence presented to FSA scientists and officials has been acknowledged and is reflected in plans for a more simplified approach, which also mirrors proposals recently unveiled by the EU in not requiring separate risk assessment, traceability or labelling of precision bred products where they are considered to be equivalent to their conventionally bred counterparts,” he said.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture exists to promote debate among politicians and other stakeholders on the value and role of scientific innovation in UK agriculture. The Group works to ensure that the Government’s support for agri-science is maintained and strengthened, that the regulatory environment is evidence-based and enabling, and that the contribution of modern agriculture to our society, economy and environment is valued and understood as widely as possible.

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