



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

23 March 2023 – for immediate release

### **APPG chair welcomes major breakthrough for regulation of genetic innovation in agriculture**

Welcoming today's confirmation that Royal Assent has been granted to the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill to make it an Act of Parliament, Julian Sturdy MP, chair of the APPG on Science and Technology in Agriculture, said:

“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 we inherited from the EU. The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill successfully completed its passage through both Houses of Parliament and I welcome today's confirmation that it has been signed into law.”

“This is an important milestone for genetic innovation in agriculture, opening up the potential for scientists and breeders to help farmers keep pace with demands for increased agricultural productivity and resource-use efficiency, reduced chemical use, and resilience to climate change. Importantly, it also aligns our approach with the regulatory stance of other countries, such as Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Japan and Australia, which do not regulate gene edited products as GMOs.”

“However, Royal Assent it is not the end of the process. The provisions set out in the legislation will not fully come into force until around 30 separate pieces of secondary legislation are passed, a process expected to take a further 18-24 months. So the Act's passage through Parliament is an important step forward, and a positive signal of a more pro-innovation trajectory as the first time in decades that legislation has been brought forward which seeks to enable, rather than restrict, the use of genetic innovation in agriculture. But there is a lot of work still to be done to ensure that these implementing rules are proportionate, guided by the scientific evidence of risk, and in line with the underpinning rationale of the Act that precision breeding delivers the same outcomes as conventional breeding, only faster and with greater accuracy. That will mean precision bred products could realistically be available to farmers here before the end of this decade. Given the challenging business conditions and growing impacts of climate change, those benefits cannot come soon enough.”

**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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