

Consumer perceptions of genome edited food

Area of research interest: [Behaviour and perception](#)

Study duration: 2020-11-01

Project status: Completed

Project code: FS430673

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Date published: 21 July 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46756/sci.fsa.aya629>

Background

Genome editing, also known as gene editing, is one of the precision breeding techniques in food that may be adopted by the government after EU Exit. Therefore DEFRA have run a [public consultation on genetic technologies in food](#). This research complements the consultation by gathering evidence specifically on consumer interests. For more information about genome editing in food, view our [FSA Explains video](#).

Objectives

- To understand consumer perceptions of GE food, in order to inform future food policy.
- To help inform communications if new GE food policy is introduced.

Methodology

- Qualitative stage: online deliberative dialogue workshops, bridged by an online community, with 80 consumers across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- Quantitative stage: online survey of 2,066 consumers representative of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Key findings

- Consumers tended to have very low awareness and very low knowledge of GE food.
- More informed consumers were, or became, more accepting of GE food.
- Consumers tended to find GE food more acceptable than GM food. However, consumers found GM or GE applied to plants more acceptable than applications to animals, for example, due to human safety and animal welfare concerns.
- Most consumers felt it would be appropriate to regulate GE foods separately from GM foods. At the same time, many felt regulation should be just as thorough as for GM.
- Most consumers felt labelling should always inform the consumer of the presence of GE ingredients using the full term 'genome edited'.
- Overall, consumers wanted thorough regulation and transparent labelling if GE foods reach the UK market, and they suggested social media information campaigns and TV documentaries would help educate the public on GE food.

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