

Strategic plan 2015-2020



Our Vision

GM Freeze is working to help create a world in which our food is produced responsibly, fairly and sustainably.

Our Mission

GM Freeze exists to consider and raise the profile of concerns about the impact of genetic modification. We inform, inspire, represent and support those who share our concerns. We campaign for a moratorium on GM food and farming in the UK. We oppose the patenting of genetic resources.



By Agunther (own work), Wikimedia Commons

The core values that motivate our work

- We believe that everyone in the world deserves nutritious food that is produced responsibly, fairly and sustainably.
- We believe that people have a right to know what they are eating and how it was produced.
- We believe that farming is a vital and valued part of British life, the landscape and our economy.
- We believe that social factors, justice and ethics are important considerations in food and farming policy.
- We believe that the precautionary principle must be applied when considering the risks of releasing new technology into the environment.
- We believe that genetic resources are a public good and should not be controlled by any individual, group or company.
- We believe that resilience relies on diversity and that global food security cannot be achieved without maintaining a wide variety of crops, animals and farming practices.
- We believe that the cloning of farm animals causes great suffering and is, therefore, unacceptable.
- We work from a strong evidence base.
- We work collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals while respecting each organisation or individual's different perspective and approach.

Our history and the challenge before us

In 1999, the umbrella campaign Five Year Freeze was formed by organisations concerned about the impact of genetic modification in food and farming. In 2005, GM Freeze became a non-profit limited company. We are still run by our member organisations who share our values and vision.

Our original remit was to achieve a five year moratorium on the growing of GM crops in the UK. Fifteen years on, our work has helped ensure there are still no commercial GM crops in our fields.

GM foods are a rare sight on UK supermarket shelves thanks to clear labelling (something that we fought hard to secure) and consumer rejection. However, GM crops are widely used in the animal feed that produces meat, eggs and dairy products for the UK population.

We are now facing an unprecedented push for GM from the UK Government, big business and a range of vested interests. The political conditions which have largely kept GM out of the European Union (EU) have changed and the threat of GM crops growing in UK fields has significantly increased. Products with GM ingredients are creeping onto our supermarket shelves. MPs are attacking the

principle of precaution. International treaties such as TTIP will increase the power of corporations and weaken regulatory oversight.

There is a huge PR machine promoting GM, but the technology has failed to deliver the higher yields, fewer pesticides, reduced use of fossil fuels, better nutrition or greater tolerance of drought, heat, flood or salt claimed for it. Instead, GM crops encourage monocultures, increase dependence on ever-stronger herbicides and pesticides, contribute to the development of “super weeds” and hand control of the food chain to huge agro-chemical companies.

As a result, Monarch butterflies are dying, soil is being damaged, weeds and pests are becoming more resistant, livelihoods and local communities are being destroyed and biodiversity is being sacrificed for profit while the real challenges of global food security remain unaddressed.

We can't match the budgets of those developing and promoting GM products, but we do have the commitment, creativity and expertise of our members, supporters and volunteers. We have made a big difference already and we will continue to do so.



Photo by Mike Grenville, GM Free Forest Row

Our aims for the next five years

1 We will protect people's right to grow and eat GM-free by making a practical difference to UK, EU and international policy, regulations and legislation that relate to the growing, import, production or sale of GM crops, animal feed and food in the UK.

To achieve this we will:

- a. Follow and respond to political and commercial developments as they occur.
- b. Promote public understanding of the potential impact of GM crops being planted in the UK.
- c. Support individuals and organisations to express their concerns via formal channels (eg consultations) and other means.
- d. Work with organisations and individuals who value choice, regardless of their overall position on GM.
- e. Adopt a flexible approach, adapting our tactics as events develop over time.

We will know that we have succeeded when the UK's fields remain GM free in five years' time.

2 We will raise awareness of the presence of GM in the UK and support people's right to avoid buying, using or eating products made using GM ingredients or animal feed.

To achieve this we will:

- a. Promote understanding of current regulations around GM labelling and help people to avoid GM if they wish to do so.
- b. Campaign against any dilution of current GM labelling rules and for the labelling of GM-fed meat, eggs and dairy products.
- c. Support grassroots campaigners with information, advice and resources.

We will know that we have succeeded when GM-free-fed meat, eggs and dairy products are the norm and there are no GM products or ingredients on sale in the UK.

3 We will equip organisations, campaigners and individuals to understand and communicate their concerns about the impacts of GM in food and farming.

To achieve this we will:

- a. Develop and share clear messages about the environmental, social, ethical and other negative impacts of GM in food and farming.
- b. Create and distribute resources to support grass roots campaigners.
- c. Improve the impact of our online presence by refreshing our website and expanding our social media presence.
- d. Foster cooperation across the GM movement by sharing information, plans and activities, and encouraging networking.

We will know that we have succeeded when we see a revival of GM campaigning across the UK.

4 We will keep on top of developments and represent the evidence-based case against GM through the media and other channels.

To achieve this we will:

- a. Work with scientists and other experts to ensure that we keep abreast of relevant scientific, agricultural, political and commercial developments.
- b. Build and maintain a good working relationship with key media outlets.
- c. Respond to relevant news stories, scientific research, commercial developments and other events when we have the capacity to do so effectively.
- d. Engage in official consultations and other formal routes, either on our own or in collaboration with likeminded organisations, when we have the capacity to do so effectively.

We will know that we have succeeded when there is a genuine, informed debate about the real hazards of GM amongst politicians, the media, regulators, retailers and the general public.

5 We will improve our own effectiveness as an organisation

To achieve this we will:

- a. Focus our work on the strategic aims described here, whilst retaining our ability to observe and respond to external events, adapting our plans as necessary.
- b. Review progress on a regular basis, seek feedback and listen to those with an interest in our work.
- c. Operate effective internal systems that are proportionate to our size and strategy.

- d. Be a good employer.
- e. Broaden our funding base while retaining strict ethical standards about how we raise the money that pays for our work.
- f. Work in partnership with, and support co-ordination amongst, our members, supporters, funders and other key stakeholders to maximise our collective effectiveness.

We will know that we have succeeded when we achieve our other strategic aims and deliver each year's business plan on time and within budget.



Oilseed rape plant by Sergei S. Scurfield, via Wikimedia Commons

Please get in touch if you would like to support our work, join our mailing list or just find out more.

You can contact our Director Liz O'Neill on liz@gmfreeze.org or 0845 217 8992.

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We use an 0845 phone number to protect the privacy of our staff, who work from home. Calls to this number will cost 3p per minute plus your telephone company's Access Charge.