

General Election 2019

GM Freeze manifesto for a responsible, fair and sustainable food system



GM Freeze is the UK's umbrella campaign on genetic modification (GM) in food and farming with members including NGOs, charities, farmers, retailers, scientists, grassroots campaigners and concerned individuals. Our 2019 General Election Manifesto sets out the commitments that UK politicians need to make to help create a world in which everyone's food is produced responsibly, fairly and sustainably.



What we want

- Protection for people, animals and the environment, through robust GM regulations that allow the use of GMOs in food and farming to be properly scrutinised by politicians and the public.
- A fair deal for farmers, beekeepers, growers and everyone in the food chain, with protection from contamination and clear financial liability for any harm done by growing or using GM crops.
- Informed choice for everyone through clear labelling of food produced with GM ingredients or from GM-fed animals.

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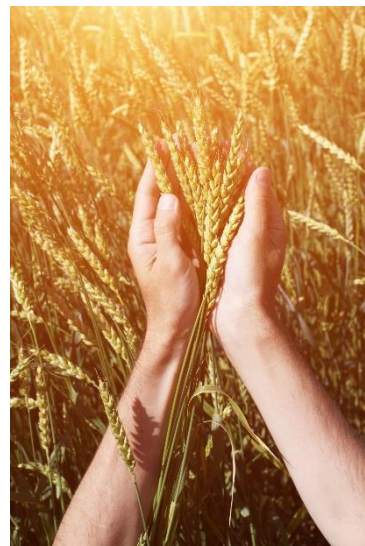
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To achieve these aims as the UK prepares to leave the European Union, we are asking prospective MPs to commit to:

1. Establish and maintain rigorous UK regulations, based on the precautionary principle, for the approval of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for release into the environment whether via field trials, cultivation, import or any other means. These must include:

1.1. Robust, transparent and independent case by case risk assessments that recognise the potential for unplanned genetic changes and for unintended impacts of both planned and unplanned changes to the genome.



1.2. Assessment and monitoring of the short, medium and long term impacts of the cultivation of the proposed GMOs on the local, regional and global environment. For example, the assessment of herbicide tolerant GM crops should consider the impact of increased application of the associated herbicide on wildlife, biodiversity and soil health.

1.3. Assessment and monitoring of the short, medium and long term impacts of the consumption of the proposed GMOs, as grown, on the animals or people that will eventually consume them. For example, the assessment of herbicide tolerant GM crops should consider the impact of increased application of the associated herbicide on the safety and nutrition of the food or feed produced from the crop.



1.4. Full assessment of proposed GMOs with stacked traits, separate from and additional to any assessment of the individual traits when present in other GMOs.

1.5. Assessment and monitoring of social, economic and ethical impacts of the cultivation, import or other release of any GMO, in addition to safety concerns.

1.6. Meaningful opportunities for the public and civil society to participate in the GMO authorization process. This will require significant work to explore people's concerns and understand the issues they raise, regardless of their background or scientific literacy.



2. Develop the UK's capacity to effectively replace the role of key European Union (EU) agencies including the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in terms of expertise, knowledge, experience and staffing. Consideration of any applications for the cultivation, import or other release of GMOs should be delayed until such capacity has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of both Parliament and stakeholders.
3. Restore democratic control and scrutiny of GM regulations, including retained EU law and any new regulations that may be developed, by reversing the effect of Statutory Instruments that give Ministers the power to amend relevant regulations without Parliamentary approval.¹
4. Establish and maintain a UK requirement to label food containing GMOs and food derived from animals that have been fed GMOs.
5. Establish and maintain robust legal measures to prevent contamination with GMOs by any means and damage caused by GMO cultivation or use such as drift from herbicides sprayed on herbicide-tolerant GM crops. This includes respecting the right of the UK's devolved nations to set their own policy on GM by preventing contamination and damage across national borders.
6. Establish and maintain a 'polluter pays' liability regime that will ensure fair compensation for UK farmers, growers, beekeepers and any others impacted in the event of contamination or damage caused by the cultivation or use of GMOs.
7. Respect the right of the UK's devolved nations to develop and pursue their own policy on GM in food and farming, whilst protecting their right to choose GM-free through strict contamination and liability measures as set out above.
8. Support the principle of public subsidy for public good and recognise genetic diversity as a key public good that is different from and additional to biodiversity.
9. Respect and uphold the European Court of Justice ruling² that newer forms of genetic engineering such as genome editing *are* GM and must be regulated as such. This includes restricting the release of any such GMOs until effective identification and traceability measures have been established.
10. Respect the strongly held public view that high standards must be maintained, including where this may be identified as a barrier to trade deals.³



To achieve the same aims if the UK's decision to leave the European Union is reversed, we are asking prospective MPs to commit to:

- 1.** Defend and uphold the EU's regulations, based on the precautionary principle, for the approval of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for release into the environment whether via field trials, cultivation, import or any other means.
- 2.** Work within the EU to establish the requirement to label food derived from animals that have been fed GMOs.
- 3.** Establish and maintain robust measures to prevent contamination with GMOs by any means and damage caused by GMO cultivation or use such as drift from herbicides sprayed on herbicide-tolerant GM crops, including across national border.
- 4.** Establish and maintain a 'polluter pays' liability regime that will ensure fair compensation for UK farmers, growers, beekeepers and any others impacted in the event of contamination or damage caused by the cultivation or use of GMOs.
- 5.** Respect the right of the UK's devolved nations to develop and pursue their own policy on GM in food and farming, whilst protecting their right to choose GM-free through contamination and liability measures as set out above.
- 6.** Support the principle of public subsidy for public good and recognise genetic diversity as a key public good that is different from and additional to biodiversity.
- 7.** Respect and uphold the European Court of Justice ruling² that newer forms of genetic engineering such as genome editing *are* GM and must be regulated as such. This includes restricting the release of any such GMOs until effective identification and traceability procedures have been established.
- 8.** Respect the strongly held public view that high standards must be maintained, including where this may be identified as a barrier to trade deals.³

To find out more, please contact us on info@gmfreeze.org or 0845 217 8992.

References

¹ UK Trade Policy Observatory, Briefing Paper 37, October 2019: Brexit food safety legislation and potential implications for UK trade: the devil in the details <http://blogs.sussex.ac.uk/uktpo/files/2019/10/UKTPO-Briefing-Paper-37.pdf>

² Case C-528/16, Confederation paysanne and Others on the status of certain mutagenesis-based genetic engineering techniques. See GM Freeze press release, 25 July 2018 for details <https://www.gmfreeze.org/press-releases/4966/>

³ April 2018 [IPPR poll](#) found that, when asked whether the UK should lower food safety standards to secure a trade deal with the US or retain current standards, only 8% of the public thought the UK should lower food safety standards, with 82% preferring to keep standards as they are.