

Reframing GM: Top 5 Tips

from the *GM Freeze messaging guide*

Things to say Things to avoid

1) Call out rebranding: Gene editing is genetic modification with better PR

- Genetic manipulation
- Plants (or animals) created in the lab
- New, experimental forms of genetic engineering (or genetic modification)

If you HAVE to use the jargon, say gene-edited GMOs or try using quotation marks and phrases like 'so-called' to make it clear that you do not accept the term at face value.

- Talking about gene editing as something different from GM, or using the abbreviation GE as this backs up the idea that gene editing is something separate.

- New Breeding Techniques or similar phrases - breeding works with nature while GM tries to overpower it.

2) Name the problem

- Weedkiller-linked crop
- Pesticide-friendly soya (or maize, etc)
- GMOs that kill insects
- Abuse-tolerant GM animals

- Bt or herbicide tolerant crops.
- Claims made by GM developers, such as "disease resistant gene edited animals" or "high iron wheat".

3) Emphasise the need for protection

To talk about regulation, say:

- Safety net
- Common sense protections and sensible safeguards

To talk about deregulation, say:

- Free for all, putting the public and nature at risk for profit
- High-tech takeover
- Dismantling the safety net of public protections
- Race to the bottom

- "Red tape" even when disputing this term (eg "don't say this isn't just red tape")

- Regulation, unless you are talking about specific regulations in a technical context - focus instead on the words that highlight what good regulation achieves.

4) Tell our story, not theirs

- Genetic mutilation, damage or injury
- Gambling with our food or with nature
- Use images that show DNA being damaged and technology upsetting the natural balance

- Genetic edits, scissors, snips or cuts
- Images that show scissors or scalpels
- Images that imply precision, perfection or micro-surgery.

5) Broaden the debate

- GM patents lead to greater corporate control of the food chain.
- We already produce more than enough food for the predicted peak world population – if we want to stop people going hungry we need to address poverty and food waste.
- Successful approaches work with nature, rather than trying to overpower it.

- Engaging in any debate that is framed as "science vs campaigners"
- Responding to every incorrect claim or statement made in favour of GM in food and farming. Most people can't follow the technical details but they will care about the bigger picture.