

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** March 31, 2025

**Report Number:** UK2025-0009

**Report Name:** UK government publishes Precision Breeding secondary legislation

**Country:** United Kingdom

**Post:** London

**Report Category:** Biotechnology - Plants and Animals, Biotechnology and Other New Production Technologies

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**Report Highlights:**

Two years after the primary Precision Breeding legislation was passed, the UK government has published the secondary legislation needed to implement it. After this Statutory Instrument clears its Parliamentary hurdles, the way should be clear for gene editing techniques to be used to develop improved crop varieties for commercialization, with applications for the first authorizations expected in fall 2025.

On February 25, 2025, the UK government published the secondary legislation (i.e., “Statutory Instrument”) needed to implement the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023, laying before Parliament The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Regulations 2025. Two years have passed since the primary legislation was adopted in March 2023. The Statutory Instrument is now expected to be debated and voted on by both Houses of Parliament in the coming weeks. Following this adoption, there will be a six-month delay until the regulations enter into force. For this reason, first applications for authorizations for Precision Bred Organisms (PBOs) are not expected before fall 2025.

The secondary legislation will provide the legal framework for authorizing the commercializing (planting and selling) of exclusively plant-based PBOs in a food or feed products in England.

Accompanying the publication of the secondary legislation were also draft [PBO application guidance](#) and [technical guidance to applicants](#), as well as a [consultation](#) on a proposed Precision Bred Plant Variety List for England, as a precursor to further secondary legislation.

Speaking at the National Farmers’ Union conference on February 25, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary, Steve Reed, suggested the regulations offered “huge potential to transform the plant breeding sector in England by enabling innovative products to be commercialized in years instead of in decades”. The legislative progress has been welcomed across a range a UK scientific institutions and universities as a significant step forward for UK research and development in this crucial new technology, freeing up the commercialization of techniques such as gene editing to develop improved crop varieties. Critics of gene editing, including the director of the campaign group Beyond GM reacted by describing the regulations as a “shoddy piece of legislation that is a fundamental breach of public trust in the UK farming and food system and a significant step backwards for consumer rights”.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.