

Potatoes need NGT to enter into green transition

Potatoes are an important part of plant-based foods of the future. The crop is high in yield and nutritional value and it has a low climate impact.

The future will increase the need for climate mitigation, including drought resistance, and healthy plants allowing a reduction in the use of plant protection products. New tools for plant breeding are needed. We cannot continue to rely on methods using slow crossing or radioactive radiation or chemistry to bring about changes in the genome. We need access to methods reflecting scientific progress over the past 20 years.

At KMC we have decided to accept the challenges of the future, and we want to develop new healthy potato varieties resistant to late blight via New Genomic Techniques. These techniques will allow for precise changes in the genome and faster results in the green transition.

KMC broadly welcomes the EU Commission proposal of 5 July 2023 on “Plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed” COM(2023)411 final.

The following are key elements that must be MAINTAINED:

1. Category 1 NGT must encompass both targeted mutagenesis and cisgenesis
 - Both forms will be needed to create the healthy plants of the future
2. The principle of verification (not authorisation) before release of NGT
 - Verification based on facts and science, not political opinions
3. Simple verification procedure with strict deadlines
 - Possible for SMEs like KMC to participate in development of future plants
4. No labelling of plant, food and feed, nor product as “NGT”
 - NGT plants are equivalent to conventional plants and specific labelling would be misinformation and discriminatory.
5. Transparency via public available register
 - Simple and practical solution

The following must be CHANGED:

1. Annex I (1) sets a limit of 20 genetic modifications and should be amended by “per haploid genome”
 - Plants vary in the number of genome strings and so not to be discriminatory the limitation should apply to the haploid genome of the plant.



KMC is a Danish farmer-owned cooperative delivering ingredients to the food industry. The production is based on potato starch and potato flakes. The cooperative is owned by 800 farmers. It has a turnover of +400 million € and 375 employees. *See more on www.kmc.dk.*