

Genomic Biotechnology and Techniques Bill

****A****

****BILL****

****TO****

Allow for the use and development of genetic technology through precision breeding for sustainable agriculture, and for connected purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

Part 1: Preliminary Provisions

****Section 1: Definitions****

(1) Unless specified otherwise, the following terms apply —

- > (a) “precision-breeding” refers to a precision bred plant or a precision bred animal.
- > (b) an organism is classed as “precision bred” if —
 - >
 - >> (i) any feature of its genome results from the application of modern biotechnology,
 - >>
 - >> (ii) every feature of its genome that results from the application of modern biotechnology is stable,
 - >>
 - >> (iii) every feature of its genome that results from the application of modern biotechnology could have resulted from traditional processes, whether or not in conjunction with selection techniques, alone, and
 - >>
 - >> (iv) its genome does not contain any feature that results from the application of any artificial modification technique other than modern biotechnology.
- > (c) “traditional processes” in relation to plants refers to —
 - >
 - >> (i) sexual fertilisation,
 - >>

- >> (ii) spontaneous mutation,
>>
- >> (iii) in vitro fertilisation,
>>
- >> (iv) polyploidy induction,
>>
- >> (v) embryo rescue,
>>
- >> (vi) grafting,
>>
- >> (vii) induced mutagenesis,
>>
- >> (viii) somatic hybridisation or cell fusion of plant cells of organisms which are capable of exchanging genetic material.

> (d) “traditional processes” in relation to animals refers to —

>

- >> (i) sexual fertilisation,
>>
- >> (ii) spontaneous mutation,
>>
- >> (iii) artificial insemination,
>>
- >> (iv) in vitro fertilisation,
>>
- >> (v) embryo transfer,
>>
- >> (vi) polyploidy induction, or
>>
- >> (vii) recovery and transfer of primordial germ cells.

> (e) “relevant animal” refers to an animal which is either a vertebrate, or —

- >> (i) invertebrate for any purposes by virtue of section 1(3) of the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

> (f) “compliance notice” refers to a notice requiring the person to whom it is issued to take specific steps within a specific period.

> (g) “stop notice” refers to a notice prohibiting the person to whom it is issued —

>

- >> (i) from carrying on a specific activity, or
>>
- >> (ii) from doing so until the person has taken specific steps.

> (h) “monetary penalty notice” refers to a notice requiring the person to whom it is issued to pay a sum specified in the notice to the appropriate authority.

Part 2: Precision-Bred Organisms

Section 2: Restrictions on Release

(1) A person who has a precision bred organism under their control is to not release the organism in the country unless —

>

> (a) the following conditions apply —

>>

>> (i) the notification requirements of Section 3 are satisfied in relation to the release

>>

>> (ii) the person is a person specified in the release notice under Section 3(2), and

>>

>> (iii) the release is carried out in accordance with the release notice, or

>

> (b) the organism is —

>>

>> (i) a marketable precision bred organism or

>>

>> (ii) the qualifying progeny of a marketable precision based organism.

(2) An organism is under a person’s ‘control’ if the person keeps it contained by measures designed to —

>

> (a) limit its contact with humans and the environment, and

>

> (b) prevent or minimise the risk of adverse effects in regards to the health of humans or the environment.

>

(3) A person ‘releases’ an organism under their control by causing or permitting it deliberately to —

—

> (a) cease to be under their control or the control of anyone else, and

>

> (b) enter the environment

Section 3: Notification Requirements of Release

(1) The notification requirements are satisfied in relation to the release of an organism if —

> (a) a person has given a release notice to the Secretary of State in relation to the release, accompanied by —

>> (i) any required information, and

>> (ii) any fee required

(2) A release notice must specify one or more persons, or descriptions of the person, in relation to the release.

****Section 4: Restrictions on Marketing****

(1) A person must not market a precision bred organism in the country unless—

> (a) it is a marketable precision bred organism, or

> (b) it is the qualifying progeny of a marketable precision bred organism.

(2) Throughout this Act “marketable precision bred organism” means a precision bred organism in respect to which—

> (a) a precision bred confirmation is in force, and

> (b) if it is a relevant animal, a precision bred animal marketing authorisation is in force.

(3) For the purposes of this Act—

>

> (a) a precision bred organism is ‘marketed’ by a person who has made available to other persons, whether or not for consideration, products that are consisting of or including—

>>

>> (i) the precision bred organism, or

>>

>> (ii) its gametes, and

>

> (b) the marketing occurs in the country, and

>

> (c) those products are made available for delivery in the country.

****Section 5: Applications for Confirmation****

(1) A person, referred to as the 'notifier' may apply for a precision bred confirmation in relation to an organism by giving a marketing notice to the Secretary of State.

(2) Regulations issued by the Secretary of State are required to —

>

> (a) make provision about the form and content of a marketing notice, and

>

> (b) prescribe required information which must accompany a marketing notice

(3) The Secretary of State must refer the marketing notice to the advisory committee mentioned in Section 6 by sending the committee the marketing notice and any required information that accompanied it as soon as practicable after receiving—

>

> (a) a marketing notice,

>

> (b) any required information, and

>

> (c) any fee prescribed by regulations

(4) Regulations under subsection (2) are subject to the affirmative procedure.

****Section 6: Advisory Committee****

(1) This section applies where the Secretary of State refers a marketing notice to the advisory committee.

(2) Within 90 days after the marketing notice is referred, the advisory committee must provide a report to the Secretary of State stating;—

>

> (a) whether it considers the organism to be precision bred, and

>

> (b) its reasons for reaching that conclusion.

(3) Before the end of that period, the committee may by an information notice request the notifier to provide further information to the committee.

(4) The committee's report to the Secretary of State must be accompanied by any information provided to the committee as the result of an information notice.

****Section 7: Issue of Precision-Breeding Confirmation****

(1) As soon as practicable after receiving a report from the advisory committee under section 6(2), the relevant agency through the Secretary of State must—

> (a) if satisfied that the organism is precision bred—

>> (i) issue a statement to the effect of a precision bred confirmation, and

>> (ii) give notice of it to the notifier;

> (b) if not satisfied, give notice to the notifier of that fact.

(2) A notice under subsection (1)(b) must state the reasons for not issuing a precision bred confirmation.

(3) The notifier will be prohibited for a minimum of six months until another application for precision-breeding confirmation can be submitted again.

****Section 8: Revocation of Precision-Breeding Confirmation****

(1) Regulations may make provision conferring power to the Secretary of State to revoke a precision bred confirmation relating to an organism if the Secretary of State is no longer satisfied that the organism is precision bred.

(2) Regulations made under this section must make provision—

> (a) for the procedure that is to be followed where the relevant agency proposes to revoke a precision-bred confirmation, which must include provision for—

>> (i) requiring a notice of the proposal to revoke a precision-bred confirmation to be published in any way that the relevant agency considers appropriate to bring it to the attention of those affected by it, and

>> (ii) permitting persons affected by the proposal to make representations about it;

> (b) about the consequences of revoking a precision-bred confirmation;

> (c) for the prescribed information to be included in the register (Section 9).

(3) Provision made by virtue of subsection (2)(b) must secure that the following are treated as revoked by the revocation of a precision-bred confirmation relating to an organism—

- > (a) a precision bred animal marketing authorisation relating to the organism;
- > (b) any marketing authorisation issued under regulations under Part 2 that was issued in reliance, for the purposes of any requirement imposed by virtue of Part 2, on the organism being a marketable precision bred organism.

(4) Regulations under this section may confer a function on the advisory committee.

(5) Regulations under this section are subject to the negative procedure.

****Section 9: Marketing Authorisation****

(1) This section applies where a marketing notice is or has been given to the Secretary of State in relation to a relevant animal.

(2) The notifier may apply to the Secretary of State for a precision bred animal marketing authorisation in relation to the relevant animal.

(3) An application under this section must include a declaration that the notifier does not expect the health or welfare of the relevant animal or its qualifying progeny to be adversely affected by any precision bred trait (“an animal welfare declaration”).

(4) An application under this section must be accompanied by —

- >
- > (a) an assessment of the risks to the health or welfare of the relevant animal or its qualifying progeny which could reasonably be expected to result from any precision bred trait,
- >
- > (b) an explanation of the steps that the notifier has taken to identify the traits and risks mentioned in paragraph (a),
- >
- > (c) any required information (see subsections 5(b)), and
- >
- > (d) any fee prescribed by regulations under this Act.

(5) Regulations may;—

- >
- > (a) make provision about the form and content of—
- >>
- >> (i) an application under this section (but subject to subsection (3)), or
- >>
- >> (ii) any document required under subsection (4)(a) or (b);

>

> (b) prescribe any further information which must accompany the application (“the required information”).

(6) After receiving an application under this section accompanied by everything required by subsection (4), the Secretary of State must refer the application to the advisory body by sending the body the application and the documents and information provided under subsection (4)(a) to (c).

This is subject to subsection (8).

(7) The Secretary of State must refer the application;—

>

> (a) as soon as practicable, if a precision breeding confirmation has already been issued in relation to the relevant animal;

>

> (b) otherwise, at any time before, or as soon as practicable after, such a confirmation is issued.

(8) The duty to refer the application does not apply if, before referring it, the Secretary of State decides not to issue a precision breeding confirmation in relation to the relevant animal.

(9) Regulations may prescribe circumstances in which an application for a precision bred animal marketing authorisation in relation to a relevant animal may be made by a person other than the notifier (and in those cases references to the notifier, in relation to the marketing authorisation and an application for it, are to be read as references to that person).

(10) Regulations under subsection (5) are subject to the affirmative procedure.

(11) Regulations under subsection (9) are subject to the negative procedure.

****Section 10: Welfare Advisory Body****

(1) This section applies where the Secretary of State refers an application for a precision bred animal marketing authorisation to the welfare advisory body.

(2) Before the end of the reporting period, the welfare advisory body must provide a report to the Secretary of State stating;—

>

> (a) whether the notifier, in making the animal welfare declaration, has had regard to;—

>>

>> (i) the traits identified by the notifier as precision bred traits, and

>>

- >> (ii) the risks identified by the notifier as risks to the health or welfare of the animal or its qualifying progeny that could reasonably be expected to result from those traits,
 - >
 - > (b) whether the notifier has taken reasonable steps to identify those traits and risks and has made an appropriate assessment of those risks, and
 - >
 - > (c) the reasons for its conclusions on the matters referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b).

(3) In this section, the “reporting period” means a period specified in regulations beginning with the day on which the application was referred to the body.

(4) Before the end of the reporting period, the body may by notice (“an information notice”) request the notifier to provide further information to the body.

(5) The body’s report to the Secretary of State must be accompanied by any information provided to the body as the result of an information notice.

(6) Subsections (2) and (3) are subject to regulations throughout this Act.

(7) Regulations under subsection (3) are subject to the negative procedure.

****Section 11: Issue of Marketing Authorisation****

(1) As soon as practicable after receiving a report from the welfare advisory body under Section 10 in relation to a relevant animal, the Secretary of State must—

decide whether to issue a precision bred animal marketing authorisation in respect of the relevant animal,

> (b) issue the authorisation if the decision is to do so, and

> (c) notify the notifier—

>

>> (i) of the decision, and

>>

>> (ii) if the decision is not to issue an authorisation, of the reasons for the decision.

(2) The Secretary of State may issue a precision bred animal marketing authorisation only if satisfied—

> (a) that the notifier, in making the animal welfare declaration, has had regard to—

>

- >> (i) the traits identified by the notifier as precision bred traits, and
 - >>
 - >> (ii) the risks identified by the notifier as risks to the health or welfare of the animal or its qualifying progeny that could reasonably be expected to result from those traits, and
- > (b) that the notifier has taken reasonable steps to identify those traits and risks and has made an appropriate assessment of those risks.

****Section 12: Precision-Breeding Register****

- (1) The Secretary of State as per this act must establish and maintain a register containing prescribed information about—
- >
 - > (a) release notices and any required information;
 - >
 - > (b) marketing notices and any required information;
 - >
 - > (c) such other matters relating to this Act as may be prescribed.
- (2) The Secretary of State must not include information in the register if, on request by a person, the Secretary deems that the information is for the time being commercially confidential in relation to that person.
- (3) The above mentioned subsection (2) ceases to apply if the Secretary of State determines that the information is no longer commercially confidential (whether or not on request by a person).
- (4) For the purposes of subsections (2) and (3), the following information is not to be regarded as commercially confidential—
- >
 - > (a) the name of any person giving the notices and required information mentioned in subsection (1)(a) and (b);
 - >
 - > (b) a general description of any precision bred organism.
- (5) The Secretary of State must ensure that the register is accessible to the public free of charge by electronic means.
- (6) Regulations may make provision for the keeping of the register.
- (7) Regulations under subsection (1) are subject to the affirmative procedure.

(8) Regulations under subsection (6) are subject to the negative procedure.

****Section 13: Monitoring and Inspection****

(1) For the purposes of this Part, the Secretary of State may appoint a necessary inspector to their discretion.

(2) An inspector appointed under this section is not liable in any civil or criminal proceedings for anything carried out in the purported exercise of the inspectors functions specified in this section if the court is satisfied that the act was done in good faith and on reasonable grounds.

(3) Regulations, through secondary legislation, may make provisions for —

>

> (a) monitoring and reporting compliance with Part 2 obligations, and

>

> (b) investigating suspected failures to comply with Part 2 obligations

(4) Subject to this section, regulations under may in particular where necessary to duties, make provisions —

> (a) conferring powers on inspectors —

>

>> (i) to enter premises,

>>

>> (ii) to inspect and search premises,

>>

>> (iii) to take copies of documents,

>>

>> (iv) to take photographs and samples,

>>

>> (v) to require the provision of information;

>

> (b) for allowing inspectors, in carrying out their functions, to be accompanied by other persons,

>

> (c) for treating matters as relevant breaches, including —

>

>> (i) obstructing an inspector,

>>

>> (ii) providing false information to an inspector, and

>>

>> (iii) impersonating an inspector.

(5) Regulations under this Section —

>

> (a) may not create criminal offences,

>

> (b) may not authorise an inspector to enter a private dwelling without the consent of the occupier except in the case of a warrant issued by law enforcement,

>

> (c) may not authorise the use of force to enter premises,

>

> (d) must contain provision to prohibit information obtained by inspectors under the regulation being used or disclosed otherwise than —

>

>> (i) for the purposes of of this Part or Part 6 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, or

>>

>> (ii) for prescribed purposes relating to safeguarding the health and welfare of animals.

(6) Regulations under this Section are subject to affirmative procedure.

Part 3: Produce from Precision Bred Organisms

Section 14: Regulation

(1) Regulations may make provision for regulating the placing on the market, in the country, of food and feed produced from precision bred organisms.

(2) Regulations under subsection (1) may, in particular;—

>

> (a) prohibit any person from placing food or feed produced from a precision bred organism on the market in the country except in accordance with a marketing authorisation issued by the Secretary of State under the regulations in relation to the organism, and;

>

> (b) impose requirements for the purpose of securing traceability in relation to food or feed produced from precision bred organisms that is placed on the market in the country.

(3) Regulations made by virtue of subsection (2)(a) may, in particular, prescribe requirements that must be satisfied in order for the Secretary of State to issue a food and feed marketing authorisation in relation to a precision bred organism which may include requirements—

>

> (a) that the precision bred organism—

>>

- >> (i) is a marketable precision bred organism, or
- >>
- >> (ii) is the qualifying progeny of a marketable precision bred organism;
- >
- > (b) for securing that—
- >>
- >> (i) any food or feed produced from the organism and covered by the authorisation will not have adverse effects on human or animal health;
- >>
- >> (ii) the way in which any such food or feed will be placed on the market will not mislead consumers;
- >>
- >> (iii) the production of any such food or feed will not have adverse effects on the environment;
- >>
- >> (iv) consuming any such food or feed in place of other food or feed that it might reasonably be expected to replace will not be nutritionally disadvantageous to humans or animals.

(4) Regulations made by virtue of subsection (2)(a) may also make provision, in particular;—

- >
- > (a) about the procedure for determining applications for food and feed marketing authorisations;
- >
- > (b) for food and feed marketing authorisations to be issued subject to conditions and limitations;
- >
- > (c) for varying, canceling conditions or limitations that apply to food and feed marketing authorisations, or imposing new ones;
- >
- > (d) about revocation of food and feed marketing authorisations;
- >
- > (e) about publication of information relating to applications for food and feed marketing authorisations.

(5) In subsection 4, references to applications for food and feed marketing authorisations include references to applications to vary or cancel conditions or limitations that apply to marketing authorisations.

(6) Provision that may be made by virtue of subsection 4 includes provision conferring functions on the Food Standards Agency, which may include provision;—

- > (a) for requiring the Food Standards Agency, in carrying out a function conferred by the regulations;—
- >>

- >> (i) to obtain advice or information from, or consult, persons of prescribed descriptions;
- >>
- >> (ii) to carry out risk assessments;
- >
- > (b) relating to any risk assessment required by the regulations.

(7) Regulations made by virtue of subsection (2)(a)—

- >
- > (a) may prescribe who is authorised to place food and feed on the market by virtue of a food and feed marketing authorisation, which may, in particular, be;—
- >>
- >> (i) only the person who applied for the authorisation,
- >>
- >> (ii) any person, or
- >>
- >> (iii) any person of a prescribed description, and
- >
- > (b) may provide for any provision made by virtue of paragraph (a) to be subject, in the case of a particular food and feed marketing authorisation, to any limitation to which the authorisation is subject.

(8) Regulations under this section are subject to the affirmative procedure.

Section 15: Produce Marketing Authorisation (Register)

- (1) Regulations may make provision for requiring the Food Standards Agency to establish and maintain a public register containing prescribed particulars relating to food and feed marketing authorisations (the “food and feed register”).
- (2) Regulations under subsection (1) may provide for information provided to the Secretary of State or the Food Standards Agency in connection with food and feed marketing authorisations or applications for them, or with applications to vary or cancel conditions or limitations, to be included in the food and feed register.
- (3) The particulars, prescribed under subsection (1) in relation to a food and feed marketing authorisation may include, particulars of any confirmation or authorisation issued under this Act that may be required in connection with the authorisation by virtue of Section 10(3)(a).
- (4) Regulations under subsection (1) are subject to the affirmative procedure.

Section 16: Monitoring and Inspection

(1) Regulations may make provision for designating one or more bodies within subsection (2) as enforcement authorities with functions of—

>

> (a) monitoring compliance the obligations of this Part, and

>

> (b) investigating suspected failures to comply to the obligations of this Part.

(2) A body is within this subsection if it;—

>

> (a) is established by or under any other Act, or

>

> (b) otherwise exercises functions of a public nature.

(3) Subject to subsection (4), regulations under this section may, in particular, make provision;—

>

> (a) conferring powers on enforcement authorities to appoint inspectors to carry out functions under the regulations;

>

> (b) conferring functions on an inspector, including;—

>>

>> (i) powers of entry, inspection, examination, search >>and seizure;

>>

>> (ii) powers to take copies of documents, photographs and samples;

>>

>> (iii) powers to impose requirements;

>>

>> (iv) powers to require the provision of information;

>

> (c) for allowing inspectors, in carrying out their functions, to be accompanied by other persons;

>

> (d) for treating matters as relevant breaches, including—

>>

>> (i) obstructing an inspector;

>>

>> (ii) providing false information to an inspector;

>>

>> (iii) impersonating an inspector;

>

> (e) for relief for inspectors from criminal or civil liability for acts done in good faith in the purported exercise of their functions;

>

> (f) corresponding to, or applying (with or without modifications), any provision made by or under;—

>>

>> (i) the Food Safety Act 1990;

>>

>> (ii) section 67 of the Agriculture Act 1970.

(4) Regulations under this section—

>

> (a) may not create criminal offences;

>

> (b) may not authorise an inspector to enter a private dwelling without the consent of the occupier except in exercise of a warrant issued by a justice of the peace.

(5) Regulations under this section are subject to the affirmative procedure.

Part 4: Enforcement

Section 17: Enforcement Regulations

(1) Regulations set the Secretary of State, via secondary legislation, may make provisions for —

> (a) an inspector to issue the following —

>

>> a compliance notice, and

>>

>> a stop notice,

> (b) where the Secretary of State or an inspector are to issue a monetary penalty notice.

(2) Regulations may provide for a requirement imposed by a stop notice to be enforceable, on the application of the Secretary of State, by injunction.

(3) Regulations under this Section must secure necessary review and appealment procedures are included.

(4) Regulations under this Section are subject to affirmative procedure.

Section 18: Compliance Notices

(1) Regulations which provide for the issue of a compliance notice must secure that —

- >
- > (a) a compliance notice may only be issued where the issuing inspector of the notice is satisfied that person to whom it is issued has committed or is committing a relevant breach,
- >
- > (b) the steps specified in relation to the notice are steps that the inspector considers will ensure that the relevant breach does not continue or reoccur, and
- >
- > (c) the period specified in relation to the notice is not less than 14 days beginning on the day on which the notice is received.

****Section 19: Stop Notices****

(1) Regulations which provide for the issue of a stop notice must secure that —

- >
- > (a) a stop notice may be issued to a person only where the inspector issuing the notice reasonably believes that the person to whom it is issued has committed or is likely to commit a relevant breach, and
- >
- > (b) the steps specified in relation to stop notices are steps that the inspector issuing the notice considers will ensure that the specified activity will be carried on in a way that does not involve the person committing a relevant breach.

****Section 20: Monetary Penalty Notices****

(1) Regulations which provide for the issue of a monetary penalty notice must ensure that the Secretary of State or an inspector may issue a monetary penalty notice only where satisfied that the person to whom it is issued had committed a relevant breach.

(2) Regulations which provide for the issue of a monetary penalty notice must require the notice to state —

- >
- > (a) how the payment may be made,
- >
- > (b) the period within which payment must be made, and
- >
- > (c) the consequences of late payment or failure to pay.

(3) Regulations which provide for the issue of a monetary penalty notice may make provision —

- >
- > (a) for the payment of interest on late payment,
- >

> (b) as to how any amounts payable by virtue of the regulations are to be recoverable.

Part 5: Final Provisions

Section 21: Extent, Commencement, and Short Title

(1) This Act extends to England only, unless—

> (a) a Legislative Consent Motion is passed in the Pàrlamaid na h-Alba, in which case it shall also apply to Scotland, or

>

> (b) a Legislative Consent Motion is passed in the Senedd Cymru, in which case it shall also apply to Wales, or

>

> (c) a Legislative Consent Motion is passed in the Northern Ireland Assembly, in which case it shall also apply to Northern Ireland.

(2) The provisions of this Act shall come into force the day this Act is passed, and has received Royal Assent.

(3) This Act may be cited as the ‘Genomic Biotechnology and Techniques Act’.

This Bill was submitted by The Rt Hon u/Hobnob88 **, Baron of Inverness, on behalf of The Liberal Democrats**

References and Inspired Legislation:

[The Agriculture Act 1970](<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1970/40/contents>)

[The Food Safety Act 1990](<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/16/contents>)

[The Environmental Protection Act 1990](<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/contents>)

[The Animal Welfare Act 2006](<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents>)

[The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023](<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/6/introduction/enacted>)

Opening Speech:

Deputy Speaker,

Throughout human agricultural history, we have been crossing and selecting plants, selecting the right characteristics to achieve better crops, better tastes and better safety via traditional practices. New genomic techniques such as precision breeding, allow us to do the same, faster and with greater precision. This bill aims to create a new framework so that new genomic techniques can support the green transition of the agri-food system. It is designed to meet the demands of farmers for the development and commercialisation of new plant varieties with beneficial characteristics. I want to clarify and stress that Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are not the same thing as this bill's subject matter, which is genome techniques. Gene editing tools, which genomic techniques are, are used to generate changes to the native genetic material. Unlike GMOs, which introduce novel configurations of genetic materials typically derived from other organisms, gene editing methods modify existing genetic material in ways that can yield beneficial outcomes.

In this bill's genomic technique focus, precision breeding involves using technologies such as gene editing to adapt the genetic code of organisms selecting beneficial traits within the plant (or a related one) that, through traditional breeding, would take decades to achieve. These techniques ought to be embraced in order to increase the sustainability of agriculture within the UK. For example, in the development of; drought- and disease-resistant crops, reductions in the use of fertilizers and pesticides, and helping to breed animals protected from contracting harmful diseases, gene editing will be crucial to advancing our agricultural sector to reduce the harmful effects and factors of current practices.

This bill is one that I believe can and will benefit both farmers, consumers and scientists. As our counterpart nations under the EU undergo developments and proposals for new genomic techniques in agriculture, it is important we not only simply level the playing field in joining the breakthrough, but seek leading advancements ourselves. We make it so new genomic techniques can be used in a safe way. Consumers can enjoy produce that is safe, sustainable and developed to high nutritional quality. And farmers can adapt and deal with the impacts in climate change and biodiversity challenges to revolutionize and transform agricultural practices in a more sustainable manner. Our proposal promotes innovation to contribute to sustainability by introducing for instance tolerance or resistance to plant diseases and pests (biotic stresses), plants with improved tolerance or resistance to climate change effects and extreme temperatures or droughts (abiotic stresses), improved nutritional characteristics or increased yield.

Under the provisions of this Act, a new simplified, science-based regulatory system will be introduced to facilitate research and innovation in precision breeding, while stricter regulations for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) will remain in place. This bill covers both plants and precision-bred animals developed through aforementioned techniques such as gene editing. The key element I want to emphasize is that, unlike GMOs, these techniques produce genetic changes that could have occurred through traditional breeding or that occur naturally. As a

regulatory work almost, the bill has extensive provisions regarding the protection of animal welfare and current food safety standards, this is of utmost importance. With notable provisions such as requirements of the FSA to establish and maintain a public register of information relating to precision-bred organisms (PBOs) authorised for use as food/feed in the country. Whilst this was a bill I was working on whilst I was EFRA Secretary, which explains the use of secondary legislation. Nonetheless, it provides these discretionary powers for ministers to make regulations in an array of areas allowing for the expertise and specialism of public bodies and thorough attention in their orders.