

Global Conference on Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems

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Abstract of the intervention:

Genome Editing in Agriculture and Food Systems in The Netherlands

The Netherlands, as a portal to Europe, is a major producer, importer, and exporter of food and feed products, and the homestead of globally operating vegetable breeding companies as well as companies specialized in microbial fermentation and food enzyme and additive production. Apart from the sector's interest in gene editing, there is also substantive academic research into gene editing applied to food-producing organisms (in particular plants and microbes), with various applications being developed. As a member state, The Netherlands has to implement EU legislation, whilst its procedures for the use of GMOs (such as gene edited organisms) at the national level have been streamlined. The national policy environment is favourable towards gene editing as a potential tool for achieving increased efficiency and efficacy of medical therapies and a more sustainable agriculture. The Dutch government has advocated leniency from Brussels with regulating the use of these techniques, both as research tool and as means to improve breeding stock. Studies into citizens' attitudes towards gene editing reveal a critical stance, with acceptability being contingent on conditions of fairness, contributions to societal goals, and safety, amongst others.