

Global Conference on Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems

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Abstract of the intervention:

Genome Editing Rulemaking in Australia

This talk will give an overview of the Australian regulatory frameworks for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and genetically modified (GM) foods and the current situation for genome editing and new breeding techniques (NBTs). In Australia GMOs are regulated under the Gene Technology Act 2000 (GT Act) and GM food under Standard 1.5.2 – Food produced using Gene Technology of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, administered by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), respectively. Both the GT Act and Standard 1.5.2 have ‘process based’ definitional ‘triggers’ that determine what is subject to regulation. For GMOs, the Gene Technology Regulations 2001 (GT Regs) details exclusions and inclusions related to the definitions of ‘gene technology’ and ‘GMO’. Amendments to the GT Regs in 2018 excluded from regulation some organisms developed with genome editing techniques, following a technical review by OGTR. A proposal by FSANZ (P-1055) to revise and update definitions in light of genome editing and NBT developments is ongoing. The importance of differentiating between designing and implementing legislation, and understanding the respective roles of scientific assessment and legal interpretation in those processes, will be stressed.