
New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated

Māori Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated

Submission on Gene Technology Bill

February 2025

About New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated

New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated (“NZKGI”) is an advocacy body for around 2800 kiwifruit growers. NZKGI’s mission is to advocate, protect and enhance the commercial and political interests of growers.

About Māori Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated

Māori Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated (“MKGI”) is an advocacy body for Māori kiwifruit growers. MKGI aim to build and grow the Māori kiwifruit business for current and future generations by connecting growers, providing leadership and advocacy. MKGI have a representative on NZKGI Grower Forum.

Public Submissions on Gene Technology Bill

The Gene Technology Bill (“the Bill”) proposes a big change for Aotearoa New Zealand, and there are many other changes happening simultaneously. We have not been able to disseminate information on gene technology to growers and adequately capture their views in the time provided since the Bill was released. This submission is therefore written to complement the work that Horticulture New Zealand have done to engage all types of growers from around the motu. We support their submission.

NZKGI and MKGI welcome the opportunity to continue to participate in public submission processes for this Bill.

NZKGI Submission

The opportunities for gene technologies to achieve positive gains for New Zealand are immense. For example, more pest and disease resistant crops flow through to reduced carbon emissions by lower use of agrichemicals and fertilisers, orchard vehicles and machinery etc. However, NZKGI would support a more measured approach to gene technology than is proposed by the Bill. We risk getting ahead of our customers and peer regulators by going ‘too big too soon’.

Kiwifruit is one of New Zealand’s biggest exports. Our industry is innovative. We are successful because we have close relationships with our markets/consumers, we respond to their needs. We will continue to innovate and embrace new technologies to remain globally competitive. This may mean using gene technology when it is legalised.

GMO-free products are valued by our customers. We therefore support the regulation of GMO.

We are concerned though, that gene editing is an exempt activity, and it would be unregulated. Gene editing would result in products are that are indistinguishable from those created through natural breeding programmes. Distinction will be important to our customers, and we therefore strongly suggest it would be prudent to regulate all gene technologies to some degree.

For example, gene edited products could be reported and registered to the regulator with some rules to follow; a similar framework to permitted activities under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulation 2013.

MKGI submission

Māori Kiwifruit Growers support a cautious approach to gene technologies, aligning with kaitiakitanga and the need to protect market trust in GMO-free products. While we recognise the potential benefits of gene editing, we share concerns that its exemption from regulation could undermine transparency and consumer confidence.

We support NZKGI's recommendation that all gene technologies, including gene editing, be subject to clear regulatory oversight. We are comfortable supporting NZKGI's submission while emphasising the importance of Māori values and long-term sustainability in this discussion.

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