

Taking Firm Stance, Scotland Pushes GMO Ban

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Scottish government officials announced Sunday they will impose a ban on the domestic cultivation of genetically modified (GM or GMO) crops, attracting praise from environmental and food safety campaigners.

“Scotland is known around the world for our beautiful natural environment—and banning growing genetically modified crops will protect and further enhance our clean, green status,” declared rural affairs secretary Richard Lochhead in a [statement](#).

“The Scottish Government has long-standing concerns about GM crops—concerns that are shared by other European countries and consumers, and which should not be dismissed lightly,” Lochhead continued.

The government invoked recently-passed European Union powers that permits individual governments, like Scotland, to prohibit GM crop cultivation within their territory. Critics [have expressed concern](#) that the EU legislation won't go far enough, because it does not ensure protection from legal challenges to bans

“The Scottish government will shortly submit a request that Scotland is excluded from any European consents for the cultivation of GM crops, including the variety of genetically modified maize already approved and six other GM crops that are awaiting authorization,” the rural affairs office said.

While the statement did not indicate whether the ban extends to scientific research, the *Guardian* [reported](#) Sunday that “a spokeswoman confirmed that laboratory research on GMOs would

continue.”

The ban signals a growing divide between the Scottish National Party and the United Kingdom’s conservative Tory government housed in London, with the latter [announcing](#) earlier this summer it will allow cultivation of GM crops.

Richard Dixon, director of Friends of the Earth-Scotland, [told](#) Scottish newspaper *The National*: “The Scottish government has been making anti-GM noises for some time, but the new Tory government has been trying to take us in the direction of GM being used in the UK, so it is very good news that Scottish ministers are taking that stance.”

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