

RICE ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT ON BIOTECHNOLOGY

The UK rice industry has always been sensitive to consumer concerns about GM rice and has been actively involved in promoting consumer choice for some years. If genetically modified rices were to become available in the UK, the rice industry would have to be convinced of their public acceptability and practical potential before using them. Currently the industry does not use GM rice and is not seeking to do so.

- The Rice Association does not have an objection in principle to modern plant biotechnology; however, the UK rice industry will only use GM rice if it is convinced of its safety in terms of the consumer and the environment, its public acceptability and practical potential.
- The Rice Association will maintain a close relationship with plant breeders and other interested parties in order to ensure that the interests of consumers, customers and the industry itself are protected as rice varieties are developed using biotechnology.
- The Rice Association will continue to monitor closely developments in the areas of labelling and patenting of agriculture and food products derived from GMOs. The industry's aim is to be open about the origin of its rice and to offer consumers all available information about the use of modern biotechnology in breeding.
- There is currently limited acceptance amongst UK/EU consumers of biotechnology in food products. Therefore the commercial development of GM rice will mean that suppliers to the UK/EU market need to establish effective systems of segregation, identity preservation and traceability in order to ensure the integrity of their non-GM rice supply.

In general, the UK rice industry is committed to maintaining the quality of its products in order to satisfy the requirements of customers and consumers alike.