



CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP ORGANISER'S REPORT

“Genome Editing and the Future of Farming”

The opinions expressed and arguments employed in this report are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the OECD or of the governments of its Member countries.

Brief Description of what the conference/workshop was about

The meeting was about genome editing and its role in the future of farming. The meeting featured specialists from a range of different backgrounds who discussed the background, case studies, genome annotation and the regulatory and public acceptance points of the technology.

Participation – details of total number of participants, countries they came from, backgrounds (academia, industry, etc.)

There were 111 people registered for the event and 100-120 in attendance who, other than the speakers, were mainly from the UK. From the people registered there were 73 from academia, 10 from governmental positions and 28 from industry.

Major highlights from the presentations

Wayne Powell (newly appointed Principal of SRUC, formally director of CGIAR) gave a presentation at the beginning where he set the scene and stressed the message of why people were gathered: the need to produce more food for a growing population with limited resources. This helped to provide a background for the audience for future discussions.

Session 2 provided case studies of where the technology is being used on various species enabling the audience to see complete examples of the technology in action.

Session 4 panel session looking at the regulatory and the public perceptions of the technology. This was a highlight as it brought all the audience together who shared similar issues. The discussion allowed for panellists to discuss their own experiences in their respective countries and what things their organisations are doing to tackle them.

Major outcomes/conclusions in terms of policy relevance

There is the need for better genome sequencing and annotation, not just the location of the genes but regulatory elements. Although the sequencing and mapping technologies are improving there was a consensus that funding large collaborative projects is vital to ensure genetic engineering technologies reach their potential.

Now is a key time for researchers to get involved in shaping the public debate and that ongoing, direct dialogue is paramount to gain public acceptance. Society, systems (regulatory and funding) and science have to work together to make sure the technology is developed and applied to achieve the sustainable productivity gains that global agriculture requires.



Relevance to CRP theme(s)

The development of new approaches to increase livestock productivity and resilience will be required to produce a long term impact on food security. Addressing the nourishment needs of a growing population is a global priority, hence the discussions on animal health and welfare, genome editing for specific traits and potential applications of the latest technologies (to create disease resistant livestock for example) are directly relevant to the CRP's Research Theme III The Food Chain and to the OECD's mission to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

Website for further details – please also indicate if the presentations are/will be available on the website

<http://www.nib.ac.uk/event/genome-editing-and-the-future-of-farming/>

<http://www.nib.ac.uk/reporting-on-the-first-nib-specialist-meeting-genome-editing-and-the-future-of-farming/>

Presentations will not be available on the website