

Gene-edited mushroom doesn't need regulation, USDA says

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A gene-edited version of edible *Agaricus bisporus* mushrooms (unedited mushroom shown) doesn't need to be regulated as a genetically modified crop, agriculture officials say.

A mushroom whose genes have been edited with molecular scissors known as CRISPR/Cas9 doesn't need to be regulated like other genetically modified crops, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said April 13 in a letter to the mushroom's creator. The edible fungus is the first CRISPR-edited crop to clear USDA regulation.

Yinong Yang, a plant pathologist at Penn State University, used CRISPR/Cas9 to snip out a tiny bit of one gene from the mushroom *Agaricus bisporus*. The edit reduces browning when the mushroom is sliced.

Because the gene editing left no foreign DNA behind, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service determined that the mushroom poses no risk to other plants and is not likely to become a weed.

Yang says he plans to submit data about the mushroom to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. FDA clearance isn't required but, says Yang, "we're not just going to start marketing these mushrooms without FDA approval."

by Tina Hesman Saey
April 15, 2016

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