

Press release

Switzerland is squandering opportunities for innovative breeding – scienceindustries calls for a change of course

Zurich, 09.07.2025. **The current draft for the New Breeding Technologies Act (NBTA) prevents progress and isolates Switzerland in international comparison. scienceindustries calls for a fundamental revision – to strengthen innovation, food security and competitiveness.**

scienceindustries, the business association for the chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industries, firmly rejects the draft for a new federal law on plants derived from new breeding technologies (NBTA). The draft misses the opportunity to give Swiss agriculture and research access to modern, precise and sustainable breeding methods. Instead of following the international trend, the proposed legislation consolidates a scientifically unjustified special regulation – with serious consequences for innovation, competitiveness and food security.

The NBTA blocks progress instead of enabling solutions

New breeding methods such as genome editing offer enormous potential: they allow targeted changes to the genetic material of plants – often without foreign genetic material – and can make a significant contribution to resource-efficient, climate-resilient agriculture. Numerous varieties are already being cultivated worldwide or are about to be launched on the market. Leading agricultural nations such as the USA, England, Brazil and Japan, as well as the EU, support differentiated, risk-based regulation of such plants – based on their actual characteristics rather than the breeding method used. The Swiss draft law, by contrast, is largely based on the outdated Genetic Engineering Act of 2003 and effectively imposes a ban on the use of new breeding methods – despite decades of experience that show no additional risks compared to conventional breeding.

Consequences for agriculture, research and trade

The current draft threatens to isolate Switzerland in regulatory terms. While modern varieties could hardly be developed or cultivated here, they would be available via import – a clear competitive disadvantage for Swiss agriculture. The draft also entails massive restrictions for research, breeding, and the biotechnology industry.

scienceindustries calls for a complete revision

Instead of a path that hinders innovation, what is needed is a modern approval system aligned with international scientific and regulatory standards. Switzerland must:

- Enable openness to technology instead of imposing blanket bans
- Avoid competitive disadvantages, especially for domestic agriculture
- Apply science-based rules focused on the product, not the method
- Ensure compatibility with international trade frameworks

The current draft is unfit to meet these objectives. scienceindustries is therefore calling for a fundamental revision of the NBTA to ensure that the opportunities of new breeding technologies can also be harnessed in Switzerland.

[Read the full statement here \(only available in German\)](#)

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About scienceindustries:

scienceindustries, the Swiss business association for the chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industries, is committed to creating internationally outstanding framework conditions for its approximately 250 member companies. Around 80,000 people are employed in the chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industry in Switzerland. As Switzerland's largest export industry, it makes a significant contribution to Swiss prosperity.