



Health  
Canada

Health Products  
and Food Branch

Santé  
Canada

Direction générale des produits  
de santé et des aliments

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May 28, 2021

Ms. Lucy Sharratt, Coordinator  
coordinator@cban.ca  
Canadian Biotechnology Action Network  
P.O. Box 25182 Clayton Park  
Halifax, NS B3M 4H4

Dear Ms. Sharratt,

Thank you for your correspondence of May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 regarding Health Canada's meeting with CropLife Canada on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss our proposed voluntary transparency initiative. We were also seeking more information on CropLife Canada's Nature Nurtured website.

During the development of the proposed new novel food guidance, focussed on products of plant breeding, we had described to stakeholders, including yourself, our intent to develop a voluntary system for the publication of information on non-novel gene-edited plant varieties. The aim of this Voluntary Transparency Initiative (VTI) is to increase transparency regarding non-novel products that may be present in the Canadian food supply. Our objective at the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting with CropLife Canada was to stress the importance of transparency and encourage strong industry participation should our proposed initiative be implemented. We were also interested in understanding any potential concerns that CropLife Canada may be aware of to full participation by their members. Understanding their position was important in developing an approach that would increase transparency, given the limits of our regulatory authority to mandate disclosure.

The other objective of the meeting was for CropLife Canada to provide an overview of their newly developed website entitled 'Nature Nurtured'. According to CropLife Canada, this industry-led website aims to describe gene editing in plain language terms for the

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public and highlight the potential applications of this technology for plant breeding. Our request for this overview was to help us better understand how this website would fit into the industry's plans regarding transparency. Health Canada will not, in any way, promote or rely on this website. We will also continue to encourage CropLife Canada to accurately describe gene editing and gene-edited products on their website.

We believe that transparency regarding gene-edited products for food use is critical to maintaining public trust in the Canadian food supply.

Health Canada will continue to provide impartial information to Canadians through our website and seek ways to increase the transparency of the regulatory system within the limits of our authority.

We thank you for your organisation's comments on our proposed initiative, they will be carefully considered during the finalization of our guidance.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. McIntyre', written in a cursive style.

Karen E. McIntyre  
Director General, Food Directorate