Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

George Freeman MP
Minister for Science, Research and Innovation

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Mag. Johanna Eckhardt
Project Coordination
No Patents on Seeds

Email: johanna.eckhardt@no-patents-on-seeds.org

Dear Johanna,

Thank you for your email dated 27 September to the Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg and the Rt Hon Ranil Jayawardena, regarding patents on plant genes. I am responding on behalf of the Government as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio. I apologise for the delay in response, your correspondence has only recently been brought to my attention.

I understand from the attached letter and report that No Patents on Seeds is concerned about the patent-granting practice of the European Patent Office and the impacts this could have for the plant and animal breeding sector.

Unfortunately, my diary commitments mean I am unable to meet with you currently. I suggest, however, it would be useful to explore the questions raised in your technical report about patents, genes and the agricultural breeding sector with my officials at the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO). This exchange should be valuable as the Chief Executive of the IPO represents the UK on the supervisory body of the European Patent Office. My officials will be in touch with you to arrange a meeting.

I recognise that it is important that the patent system strikes a balance between the needs of innovators, competitors, farmers and breeders. So I would like to thank you again for sending me your views about this in the context of the plant and animal breeding sector. As a former advisor on agritech and seeds this is an issue I take very seriously.

Thank you again for writing. I hope you will find this reply helpful.

Yours sincerely,



GEORGE FREEMAN MP
Minister for Science, Research and Innovation