

GM crop trials start again in Britain in 'secret': report

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Photo illustration of potatoes. Genetically modified crops are being grown in Britain for the first time in 12 months after controversial trials were resumed without alerting the public, a newspaper reported Monday.

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Cultivation of a field of [potatoes](#) designed to be resistant to [pests](#) was abandoned more than a year ago when environmental protesters ripped up the crop, the Daily Telegraph said.

But, without alerting the public, the project near Tadcaster in northern England has been restarted, prompting warnings from green groups that local farms and residents could be put at risk, the newspaper said.

One group accused the government of trying to "slip it under the radar."

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said the potatoes would be grown in a safe environment, where there is no risk of contamination. They would not be used for human or animal consumption, it said.

The trial, run by Leeds University, is looking at potatoes that are resistant to a parasite worm that costs British [farmers](#) millions of pounds a year in lost and damaged [crops](#).

Genetically-modified crops have a gene, or genes, inserted into them in the lab so that they acquire traits that are useful to farmers.

They are widely grown in North America, South America and China.

But in Europe they have run into fierce resistance, led by green groups who say the crops carry risks through cross-pollination, potentially creating "super-weeds" that are impervious to herbicides.

Only a handful of genetically modified crops have been approved for cultivation in the European Union, but of them only MON810, approved in 1998, is so far being grown.

France this month rejected a report by the European Union's food safety watchdog that said a controversial strain of genetically-modified corn was safe.

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