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Report Highlights:

Israel does not have a policy restricting the use of imported genetically engineered (GE) commodities or their derivative products. However, Israel still restricts the commercial production of GE commodities or their derivative products. Additionally, there have been no changes to Israel's policies on plant, animal, or microbial biotechnology in the past year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As of October 2025, Israel has no policy restricting the use of imported genetically engineered (GE) commodities or their derivative products. Under Israel's 2005 "Seed Regulation for Plants and Other GE Organisms" (GE Seed Regulation),[1] the sale of GE crops is prohibited without a valid "Registration Certificate." However, GE crop production is only permitted for research purposes.

Israeli regulations allow for the import, sale, and use of GE commodities and products for food, feed, and pharmaceutical purposes. Additionally, Israel's *Kashrut* authority has determined that the use of GE ingredients in food does not affect its kosher status, as these ingredients are used in "microscopic" proportions.[2]

Currently, Israel does not track or quantify the volume of agricultural biotechnology imports. Grains and oilseeds, some of which may be biotech varieties, are supplied by various countries to Israel. While GE production is limited to research and development, some GE ornamental flowers developed in Israel have been sold internationally. However, these were produced in a third country. No GE animals are produced or imported into Israel.

In October 2013, the Ministry of Health (MoH) drafted regulations for novel foods,[3] including those produced using biotechnology. However, it remains unclear when these regulations will be approved. Once (or if) approved, the regulations will take effect one year after publication.

In recent years, Israel has increasingly aligned its food standards with those of the European Union (EU). In August 2024, the MoH's Israeli Food Control Services (IFCS) amended the "Protection of Public Health Law (Food)-2015" to adopt over 40 new EU food standards and regulations.[4] However, this amendment does not apply to novel foods, as legislation on novel foods is expected in the coming years.

While Israeli scientists generally support biotechnology, environmental activists have raised concerns about its use. Most Israelis lack a clear position on GE products, and many do not understand the distinction between traditional plant breeding, biotechnology, or genetic modification.

In March 2017, Israel's National Committee for Transgenic Plants (NCTP) ruled that genome-edited plants created solely by deleting nucleotides—without introducing foreign DNA—are not classified as transgenic and are exempt from GE seed regulations. However, genome-edited plants that incorporate foreign DNA, along with their offspring, remain subject to existing GE regulations.

[1] https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/legalinfo/regulations-seeds-engineered-plants-heb-2005/he/legal_info_gmoregulations2005.doc (Hebrew)
[2] https://www.yeshiva.org.il/ask/5653 (Hebrew)
[3] https://www.gov.il/he/pages/novel-food (Hebrew)
[4] See IS2024-0020: Israel Adopts Additional European Union Standards for Agricultural Imports

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CHAPTER 1: PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a. **RESEARCH AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:** Israel is a global leader in genetic engineering and research, with a strong focus on enhancing plant resilience to pests, diseases, herbicides, salinity, and drought. Israel is also advancing research in biological coatings and food packaging technologies to improve quality and extend shelf life. These efforts are carried out by Israeli universities, government institutions, and private sector organizations. Genetic engineering for research and development is permitted in Israel, provided it complies with legal requirements and is conducted under a valid research permit.

   Israel's 2005 "Seed Regulation for Plants and Other Genetically Engineered Organisms"[5] outlines the guidelines for conducting research involving genetically engineered (GE) propagation materials. Research trials must receive approval from the NCTP, a 13-member body led by a member from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MOAFS) nominated by the Minister of Agriculture.

   The progression and developments in GE research are typically kept confidential by companies until a product's registration phase. During registration, applicants must disclose product details to the NCTP. Some research projects are publicly accessible through the website of the National Center for Genome Editing in Agriculture.[6]

   In May 2020, the Israel Innovation Authority approved the creation of the Genome Editing Consortium, known as CRISPR-IL.[7] This consortium was established to develop an artificial intelligence-driven platform aimed at enhancing the efficiency, precision, and safety of gene-editing tools, ultimately facilitating their approval for commercial use. The system is designed to be applicable to human, plant, and certain animal DNA, with potential applications across the pharmaceutical, agricultural, and aquaculture sectors. CRISPR-IL brings together a diverse group of stakeholders, including companies specializing in bioinformatics, biotechnology, and agriculture (both plant and animal), as well as medical institutions and academic organizations. Participating entities include Evogene, Better Seeds, BTG – Bio-technology General Israel, Colors Farm, FreeZem, Hazera Seeds, NRGene, Pluristem, Rahan Meristem Ltd., and TargetGene.

b. **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:** Currently, the only GE crop grown commercially in Israel are tobacco plants used to produce collagen.[8] This crop is cultivated under confinement conditions to ensure isolation from potential pathogens and vectors. The GE tobacco plant is primarily used for cosmetic and pharmaceutical applications.[9]

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[5] https://www.gov.il/he/departments/legalInfo/regulations-seeds-engineered-plants-heb-2005 (Hebrew)
[6] https://igea.org.il/en/
[7] https://nrgene.com/about-us/
[8] https://collplant.com/technology/technology-rhcollagen/
[9] https://hafakulta.agri.huji.ac.il/%D7%9E%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9D/%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%A1%D7%99%D7%95%D7%91 (Hebrew)

c. **Exports:** Israeli food products exported to the United States or other countries may contain biotechnology (biotech) components, as the local industry relies on imported raw materials that may include GE elements. This is particularly true for products that use imported grain, oilseeds, or cotton as inputs. Israeli exporters are required to comply with the GE labeling regulations of the importing country – i.e., if a product contains GE components and is destined for a market with specific labeling requirements, producers must ensure the product is appropriately labeled.

d. **Imports:** Israel imports all soybeans and corn used in its food and feed manufacturing, with most of these imports being GE. In 2024/2025, Israel imported 284,000 metric tons (MT) of soybeans[10] and 1.2 million MT of corn[11], with only a portion sourced from the United States -- key suppliers include countries in South America and the Black Sea region. However, there is no specific data available on the percentage of GE varieties within these imports.

e. **Food Aid:** Certain food aid shipments destined for the Palestinian Authority (Gaza and the West Bank) are routed through Israeli ports and land crossings. In accordance with the Paris Agreement,[12] these shipments are inspected by MOAFS and MoH officials to ensure compliance with Israeli standards and regulations. Food aid shipments are exempted from Israeli labeling requirements.

f. **Trade Barriers:** At present, there are no trade barriers specific to GE products in Israel. However, if the proposed novel food regulation is enacted, imported GE food products will be subject to labeling requirements. Local importers and distributors will bear the responsibility for ensuring proper labeling. Additionally, the regulation would introduce a pre-market approval process for GE foods.

PART B: POLICY

a. **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:** Responsibility for the research, development, use, and approval of GE products in Israel is primarily shared between MOAFS and the MoH's National Food Services (NFS).[13]

Table 1: Language Used in Israeli Regulation

Legal Term (in official language)	Legal Term (in English)	Where Term is Used	Legal Definition (in English)
אורגניזם מהונדס	Genetically Modified Organism	Seed Regulation for Plants and Other GE Organisms	An organism, including a microorganism, a virus, a viroid, and any unicellular or multicellular, which has been modified by way of genetic

[10] IS2025-0016: Overview of Israeli Soybean Market - 2025
[11] IS2025-0008: Grain and Feed Annual
[12] https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/ParisProtocol_en.pdf?__cf_chl_tk=ByGk6byTt86AeaE1s5ChCgCVepW.VzfmF3yM3JJOBqo-1729077921-1.0.1.1-w9ZfEjpViW7C_orNxyI3dFzbVNu0Wv1GRIFsygarR2M
[13] https://www.gov.il/he/departments/units/food_control_unit/govil-landing-page (Hebrew)

			engineering in relation to the plant's life cycle
צמח מהונדס	Genetically Modified Plant	Plant Protection Law of 1956 (Hebrew) Plant Import Regulation Seed Regulation for Plants and Other GE Organisms	A plant modified by means of genetic engineering
חומר ריבוי מהונדס	Genetically Modified Propagation Material	Seed Regulation for Plants and Other GE Organisms	A genetically engineered plant and all its parts used for propagation and cultivation

MOAFS' Regulatory Framework

MOAFS, through its Plant Protection and Inspection Service (PPIS), serves as the national authority responsible for enforcing the Plant Protection Law of 1956.[14] This law provides the foundational legal framework for GE plants. Additionally, the 2005 GE seed regulation establishes specific rules governing research activities, as well as the sale, export, and import of GE materials.

The MOAFS oversees all trials involving GE plants and organisms directly related to them, such as pathogens, pollinators, and natural enemies. It is also responsible for regulating the handling, commercialization, import, and export of GE propagation materials.

Israel's legal and regulatory framework for GE plants is supported by three key bodies:

1. **The National Committee for Transgenic Plants (NCTP):** The NCTP is a 13-member inter-ministerial committee tasked with overseeing matters related to GE plants. Its composition includes representatives from various government ministries and experts from academia and the private sector. Specifically, the committee includes two members from MOAFS, who serve as chairperson and deputy chairperson, one member from each of the Ministries of Environment (MOE), MoH, and Ministry of Science (MoS), along with eight members from academia and the private sector. The NCTP's primary responsibilities include developing guidelines for conducting GE trials, publishing procedures and application forms for researchers, and advising both the government and academic institutions on GE-related issues.

2. **Plant Protection and Inspection Services[15] (PPIS) Field Inspection Teams:** The PPIS field inspection teams are responsible for enforcing the guidelines and regulations established by the NCTP regarding the handling of GE materials.

[14] https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/isr19155.pdf

[15] https://www.gov.il/en/departments/units/2ppis#:~:text=The%20Plant%20Protection%20and%20Inspection%20Services%20is%20a%20competent%20authority,quality%20of%20fresh%20agricultural%20produce.

3. **PPIS – Laboratory for Molecular Techniques and Transgenic Plants:** The PPIS Laboratory for Molecular Techniques and Transgenic Plants specializes in identifying GE seeds, vegetative propagation materials, and processed foods. The laboratory employs a "ring test" method to detect the presence of GE content in consignments intended for import or export.

NCTP Decision on Genome-Edited Plants (March 2017)

In March 2017, the NCTP issued a decision clarifying the regulatory status of genome-edited plants. Plants modified solely through the deletion of nucleotides,[16] without the insertion of foreign DNA, are not classified as transgenic and are therefore exempt from GE seed regulations. However, applicants must provide supporting data to demonstrate that no foreign DNA sequences were incorporated into the plant genome. Genome-edited plants that involve the incorporation of foreign DNA, as well as their progeny, remain subject to the regulations and guidelines outlined in the GE seed regulation.

In March 2019, the NCTP reaffirmed that plants resulting from targeted mutagenesis using genome editing techniques – specifically those that delete nucleotides and do not incorporate foreign DNA – are not classified as transgenic plants. The NCTP also clarified that removing DNA sequences from an organism does not make it a transgenic organism, whereas adding DNA sequences does.

MOH's Regulatory Framework for Novel Foods

The MoH's NFS oversees the regulation of novel foods in accordance with established procedural guidelines.[17] In October 2013, the IFCS notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) of a draft regulation on novel foods through notification G/TBT/N/ISR/710.[18] The draft regulation, titled "Public Health Regulations Food – Novel Foods 5773 – 2013," is still under review with additional revisions expected. Key provisions of the proposed regulation include:

- Requiring the registration of novel foods through a risk assessment process.
- Prohibiting the processing, importation, storage, or sale of unregistered novel foods.
- Establishing an official, periodically updated list of novel foods.
- Specifying labeling requirements for food products containing GE ingredients.

Novel Food Definition: A "novel food" is defined any food or food ingredient that meets the following criteria:

- Contains a new or modified primary structure that has not been proven safe for human consumption in Israel.
- Includes a "genetically modified organism" or part of one.
- Is sourced from plants, animals, microorganisms, fungi, or algae, or is extracted from these, and contains only enzymes that have been proven safe for human consumption in Israel.
- Is produced using a new manufacturing process (excluding cleaning and disinfecting) that alters the food's formulation, ingredients, nutritional values, metabolism in the body, or levels of unwanted substances or ingredients in food.
- Is not a previously approved food additive under food additive regulations.
- Is not a previously approved food ingredient under food ingredient regulations.
- Is not used as a processing aid or food flavoring.

[16] See, e.g., https://news.agropages.com/News/NewsDetail---22144.htm

[17] https://www.gov.il/he/pages/novel-food (Hebrew)

[18] https://eping.wto.org/en/Search/Index?countryIds=C376&freeText=isr%2F710&distributionDateFrom=2013-09-01&distributionDateTo=2015-10-04&viewData=G%2FTBT%2FN%2FISR%2F710

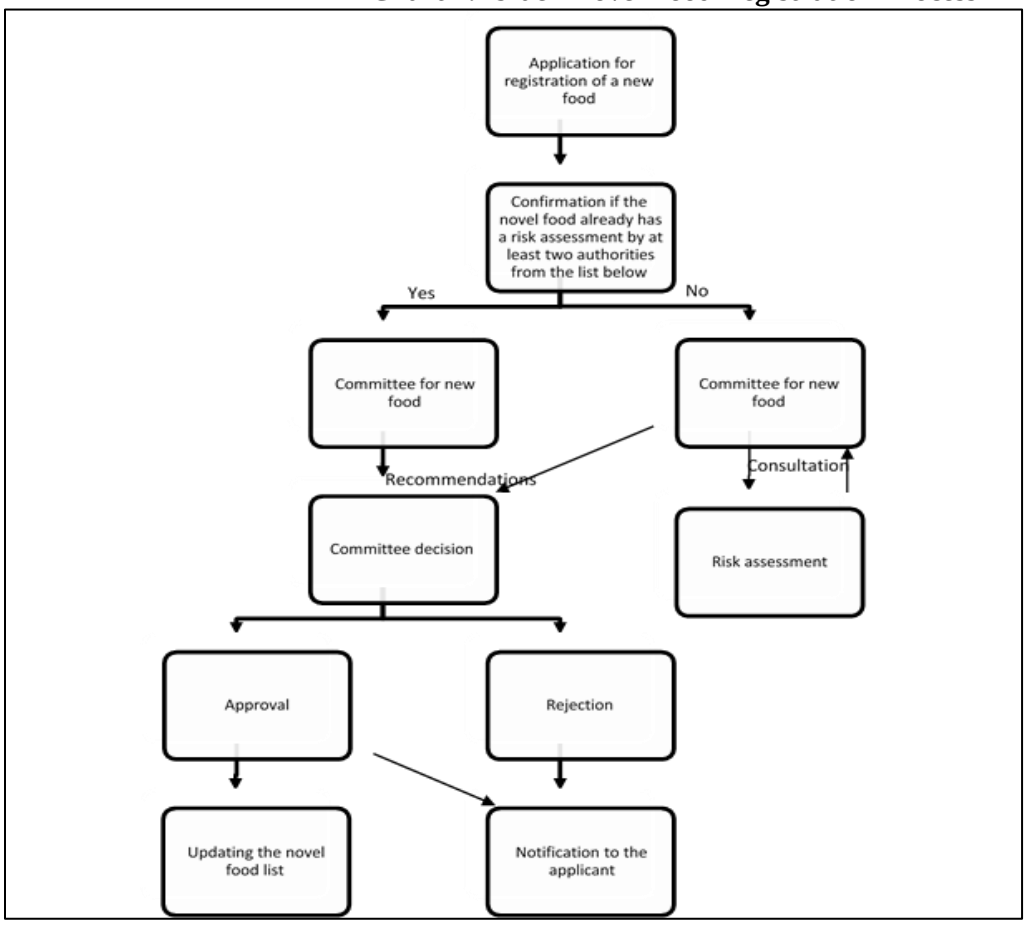
Before a new product can be approved for commercialization, it must undergo a risk assessment. Once approved, the product will be registered and included in the official list of approved products,[19] as well as published online.[20] Additionally, a novel food does not require a new risk assessment if it has already been evaluated by at least two of the international associations listed below and approved by the head of risk assessments at NFS.

- The United States – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- The European Union – European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
- Canada – Health Canada
- Australia and New Zealand – Australia and New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
- Japan – Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare/Department of Food Safety
- Specialist Committees of the *Codex Alimentarius* (including the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Health Organization)

The approval timeline for novel foods depends on the risk assessments conducted. If the food has received approvals from at least two of the certifiers mentioned above, the application process may be completed within six months. For new-to-market products, approval could take up to 12 months. Regardless of their intended use, all novel foods must follow the same approval process.[21]

[19] https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/DynamicCollectors/fcs-regulations?skip=0&fcs_regulations_subject=7&fcs_policies_subjects=17 (Hebrew)
[20] https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/policies/food004-08 (Hebrew)
[21] https://www.gov.il/he/pages/food004-08 (Hebrew)

Chart 1: Israeli Novel Food Registration Process



Source: FAS/Tel Aviv office research

Alternative Protein

Israel has made significant progress in developing alternative proteins, including cell-cultured beef, poultry, seafood, milk, and honey, which the NFS classifies as "novel foods.". Within the IFCS, the Risk Management Unit leads a dedicated working group that evaluates these products and promote advancements that protect public health. This working group also addresses the unique characteristics of these products, diverse production technologies, and varying product types, aiming to uphold Israel's leadership in the sector. However, regulations for the approval and oversight of alternative proteins are still under development through collaboration between the Israeli Veterinary Services (IVSAH) and the NFS.

b. **APPROVALS:** To date, Israel has approved only GE tobacco for pharmaceutical commercial production. However, the National Committee for Transgenic Plants has authorized field trials for other crops (see “Field Testing” below). Currently, Israel does not mandate event-by-event pre-market approval for GE imports intended for food, feed, or processing. This policy, however, may change under the proposed novel foods regulation.

c. **STACKED EVENT APPROVALS:** If a GE plant contains multiple traits, each trait must undergo separate approval. Once approved, each trait is listed individually on the official list of approved traits. The current novel food registration process does not account for stacked events, where multiple traits are combined within a single plant.

d. **FIELD TESTING:** Field trials of biotechnology-derived plants began in Israel in the early 2000s. These trials require authorization from the NCTP, which evaluates detailed applications in consultation with experts. The Israeli Plant Protection and Inspection Service oversees the regulatory supervision of these experiments.

e. **INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES:** [See *Part B: POLICY a) Regulatory Framework*] Israel has determined that plants developed through targeted mutagenesis using genome editing technologies, which do not introduce foreign DNA into the genome, are not classified as transgenic. The NCTP has also confirmed that virus-resistant cucumber plants created through genome editing are not considered transgenic.

f. **COEXISTENCE:** Israel does not currently have regulations addressing coexistence between GE crops and conventional or organic crops. Applications to work with GE products must be approved by the NCTP, which also seeks input from the National Committee for Experiments (NCE). If the NCE has concerns about the experiment or its location—such as its proximity to other crops—it may request external expert opinions before granting approval. GE tobacco plants grown for pharmaceutical commercial use can be grown only in confinement and in closed, regulated greenhouses.

g. **LABELING AND TRACABILITY:** Currently, Israel does not have a governmental policy requiring the labeling of GE products.[22] However, the draft "Public Health Regulations (Food) – Novel Foods 5773 – 2013" includes provisions for mandatory labeling of food items containing GE ingredients. According to the MoH, mandatory labeling is not intended as a deterrent or warning but rather as a measure to uphold consumers' rights to access information about their food. Under the proposed regulation, certain product categories would be exempt from labeling requirements, including:

- Products not containing foreign DNA or protein.
- Products with less than 0.9 percent of the product being comprised of GE ingredients.

Highly refined foods, such as oils, will not require special labeling under the proposed regulations, as the refining process removes proteins from the final product. Once the new labeling regulations are implemented, exporters of food items to Israel will be required to declare whether their products contain ingredients derived from GE crops. Animal feed will remain exempt from labeling requirements, and sellers will need to display a sign next to GE products sold in bulk.

In August 2024, Israel adopted over 40 new EU food standards and regulations under the "Protection of Public Health Law (Food) – 2015."[23] These standards, which went into effect on January 1, 2025, will introduce changes to food labeling requirements; however, labeling requirements for GE products will remain unchanged.

h. **MONITORING AND TESTING:** Israel does not currently have a system in place for testing or controlling the entry of GE products into the country; products containing GE components

[22] IS2024-0016: FAIRS Country Report Annual
[23] IS2024-0020: Israel Adopts Additional European Union Standards for Agricultural Imports

are allowed. Exporters producing food items from imported raw materials for export must comply with the regulations of the destination country, including any labeling and testing requirements.

i. **LOW LEVEL PRESENCE POLICY**: N/A

j. **ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** GE seeds and plants are not commercially cultivated in Israel for human or animal consumption. However, genetically engineered products, including certain novel foods, may encounter regulatory challenges. Some novel foods, such as red grape cells, have been approved for human consumption in Israel but only under strictly defined conditions.

k. **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS:** Israel is a signatory to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) and a member of the International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV). These commitments reflect Israel's adherence to international standards for intellectual property rights and the protection of plant breeders' innovations.

l. **CARTAGENA PROTOCOL RATIFICATION:** Israel is not a signatory to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. However, the Plant Protection and Inspection Services (International Relations) within the MOAFS serves as the Cartagena Protocol National Focal Point.[24]

m. **INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND FORUMS:** Israel is a member of the WTO,[25] Codex Alimentarius,[26] the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC),[27] and the FAO GM Foods Platform.[28] However, Israel does not actively engage in discussions regarding GE plant or seed varieties within these international organizations.

n. **RELATED ISSUSES:** N/A

PART C: MARKETING

a. **PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS:** In the past, some environmental activists in Israel raised concerns about the safety and potential risks associated with GE crops. One common concern is that GE seeds could "leak" into the wild and cross-pollinate with native plants, potentially creating unwanted varieties. Despite these concerns, Israeli consumers routinely purchase products containing GE materials. Meanwhile, Israeli scientists and researchers working with GE crops generally support the technology, viewing it as a valuable tool for addressing global food supply challenges.

[24] https://www.cbd.int/kb/record/focalPoint/1728
[25] https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/israel_e.htm
[26] http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/about-codex/members/detail/en/c/15676/
[27] https://www.ippc.int/en/countries/israel/
[28] http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/gm-foods-platform/browse-information-by/country/country-page/en/?cty=ISR

b. **MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES:** Israeli consumer awareness of biotechnology remains relatively low, with minimal coverage of the topic in local media. Additionally, FAS/Tel Aviv is not aware of any Israeli marketing studies focused on GE crops, seeds, or food-related products.

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

PART D: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

a. **RESEARCH AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:** Research on animal genetic engineering in Israel, using human or animal cells, is limited and primarily focused on repairing human tissue. Specific details about these studies are not widely publicized by researchers or companies. FAS/Tel Aviv is not aware of any genome editing research involving livestock or edible fish. However, in June 2020, the Israel Innovation Authority approved the establishment of the Genome Editing Consortium, known as CRISPR-IL, to advance research and innovation in genome editing technologies. [For more information, see *Chapter 1: Part A: PRODUCTION AND TRADE a. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT*].

b. **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:** Israel does not engage in the commercial production of GE animals or cloned animals, and there are no indications that such production will occur in the foreseeable future.

c. **EXPORTS:** Israel does not export GE or cloned animals, or related products. As Israel continues to align its regulations with EU standards—and given that the EU is Israel's primary export market—it is unlikely that Israel will export GE products in the foreseeable future.

d. **IMPORTS:** Israel has likely imported semen and embryos from cloned animals or their offspring, although specific data on the quantity of these imports is not available.

TRADE BARRIERS: Any GE or cloned animals in Israel would be subject to the same sanitary requirements as non-GE or non-cloned animals. Currently, there are no specific trade barriers in place that target GE or cloned animals. Cloned livestock will probably have to acquire a kosher approval from the Israeli Chief Rabbinate (OCR) as the Jewish religion has limitation on "hybrid" verities.[29]

PART E: POLICY

a. **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:** Israel's Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Law (Experiments on Animals)[30] outlines requirements for conducting experiments on animals. The Veterinary Branch of MoAFS oversees experimentation and regulation related to GE

[29] https://www.toraland.org.il (Hebrew)
[30] https://www.cbd.int/kb/record/focalPoint/1728

animal production. All experimental requests must undergo evaluation and approval by the Ministry. Currently, there are no regulations governing the import of GE animals.

b. **APPROVALS:** N/A

c. **INNOVATIVE BIOTECHNOLOGIES:** The regulatory approach to gene-edited animals in Israel remains unclear, and it is uncertain how they may be treated under future policies. Further developments in legislation or guidelines will likely depend on advancements in gene-editing technologies and international regulatory trends.

d. **LABELING AND TRACEABILITY:** Israel currently does not have a policy in place for the traceability or labeling of GE or cloned animals.

e. **ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** N/A

f. **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS:** Israel is a signatory to the TRIPS Agreement, which establishes international standards for the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights.

g. **INTERNATIONAL TREATIES and FORUMS:** Israel is a member of Codex Alimentarius and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)[31]. However, it does not actively engage in discussions related to animal biotechnologies within these organizations.

h. **RELATED ISSUES:** GE animals are not a significant topic of concern in Israel, and there is currently no legislation or regulation addressing their development, trials, commercial use, imports, or exports. The Veterinary Branch of the MOAFS serves as the lead agency overseeing matters related to GE and cloned animals.

PART F: MARKETING

a. **PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS:** GE animals are not a prominent topic of discussion in either the public or private sectors in Israel. Media coverage on the subject is rare, and many Israelis have limited understanding of the concept. While there is some general awareness of cloning – such as the case of "Dolly" the sheep – specific knowledge about GE animals is limited. Looking ahead, concerns about GE animal products are likely to center more on kosher considerations than on the origin or genetic modification of the animal itself.

b. **MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES:** FAS/Tel Aviv is not aware of any investments of time or resources in market studies or analysis related to this topic. Additionally, there appear to be no plans within the public or private sectors to pursue such efforts in the future.

CHAPTER 3: MICROBIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

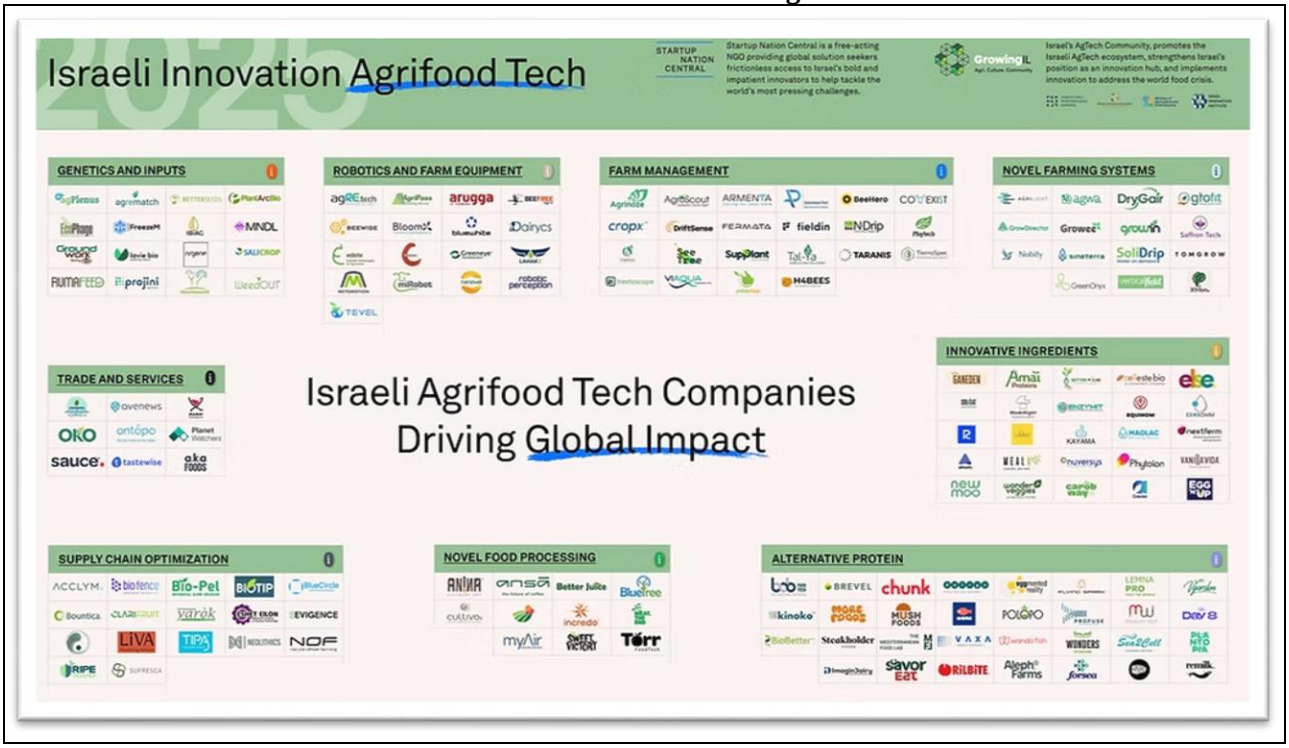
PART G: PRODUCTION AND TRADE

[31] https://www.oie.int/en/who-we-are/members/

a. **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION:** Israel's Innovation Authority report highlights the country's leadership in medical devices, agriculture, and food innovation, particulary in alternative proteins, precision agriculture, and food biotechnology.[32] Israel attracts approximately 9 percent of global investment in high-tech agriculture and food startups. As of 2025, Israel had 117 startups focused on agriculture and food and 253 startups specializing in pharma and biotech. These companies are driving advancements in novel ingredients, such as alternative proteins and sugar substitutes. However, Israel does not commercially produce food ingredients derived from microbial biotechnology. For further information, refer to the Good Food Institute's Israel State of Alternative Protein Innovation Report 2021[33] and Startup Nation Central's database as well as the World Economic Forum report, titled "Creating a Vibrant Food Innovation Ecosystem, How Israel is Advancing Alternative Proteins Across Sectors 2024."[34]

[32] https://innovationisrael.org.il/en/press_release/innovation-report-2025/
[33] Israel State of Alternative Protein Innovation Report - March 2022
[34] Creating a Vibrant Food Innovation Ecosystem: How Israel is Advancing Alternative Proteins Across Sectors

Picture 1: Israeli Innovation Agrifood Tech



Source: https://www.growingil.org/agrifoodtechmap2025

b. **EXPORTS:** Israel exports a range of products, including alcoholic beverages, dairy products, and processed foods, some of which may contain food ingredients derived from microbial biotechnology.

c. **IMPORTS:** Israel imports various products, including alcoholic beverages, dairy products, and processed foods, some of which may contain food ingredients derived from microbial biotechnology.

d. **TRADE BARRIERS:** At present, there are no trade barriers concerning food ingredients derived from microbial biotechnology. However, if the proposed novel food regulation is approved, imported GE food products will be subject to labeling requirements. The responsibility for labeling will fall on local importers and distributors. Additionally, the regulation will establish a pre-market approval process for GE foods.

PART H: POLICY

a. **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:** Microbial biotech-derived food ingredients are classified as novel foods and are regulated by the Ministry of Health. For further details, refer to *Chapter 1, Part B: POLICY, section a) REGULATORY FRAMEWORK*, within the Ministry of Health's Regulatory Framework.

b. **APPROVALS:** See official list of approved products (in Hebrew).[35]

[35] https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/DynamicCollectors/fcs-regulations?skip=0&fcs_regulations_subject=7 (Hebrew)

c. **LABELING AND TRACEABILITY:** See *Chapter 1, Part B: POLICY g) LABELING AND TRACABILITY.*

d. **MONITORING AND TESTING:** Israel currently does not conduct active testing for evidence of genetic engineering in the import or export of processed products.

e. **ADDITIONAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** In January 2024, MoH's NFS approved cultivated beef as safe for human consumption, making Israel the first country to authorize its sale. Following rigorous evaluations of safety, manufacturing, and nutritional factors, Aleph Farms, a cultured meat company, received a "No Questions" letter, making it the first company globally to secure pre-marketing approval for cultivated beef.[36]

f. **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS:** Israel is a signatory to the TRIPS Agreement.

RELATED ISSUES: The kosher status of cultivated meat remains a subject of debate among Jewish scholars, as it challenges traditional kosher laws by not coming from a slaughtered animal. However, in January 2023, Israel's Chief Rabbi David Lau ruled that cultivated meat could be considered kosher parve, provided it meets specific production standards and is certified by a kosher authority, marking a significant step forward for its acceptance in religious dietary practices.[37]

PART I: MARKETING

a. **PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPINIONS:** No research has been conducted on public perceptions of microbial biotechnology. However, the public appears to have a positive attitude toward research institutions that utilize microbial biotechnology for food ingredients or nutritional purposes.

b. **MARKET ACCEPTANCE/STUDIES:** No formal market acceptance studies have been conducted to date. However, the success of food tech startups in securing significant funding suggests positive market acceptance. For example, in 2022, $454 million was invested in Israeli innovations within the cultivated meat sector.[38] Additionally, Israel's leading food manufacturing companies have proactively established, participated in, and invested in food tech incubators and hubs. These efforts reflect a strategic vision to integrate novel food products into their offerings in the future.

[36] IS2024-0003: Israeli Government Finds Cultivated Beef to be Safe for Human Consumption
[37] IS2023-0002: Israeli Chief Rabbi Rules Cultured Meat is Kosher
[38] Ibid.

Attachments:

No Attachments