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Executive Summary:

For years the so called green genetic engineering has been the subject of controversies and debates. Often times these discussions revolve around the rejection of green genetic engineering by the population. Based on a comparatively wide data base the present work looks at the development of opinions and valuations regarding green genetic engineering and its fields of application for Germany. It can be shown that even though a lot of people think critically about genetic engineering in agriculture most of them do not reject the whole concept in general. This means that the attitude towards green genetic engineering differs depending on the sector it is being used in. Regarding the food sector the usage of genetic engineering usually causes very sensitive reactions by customers, whereas the usage of genetically modified plants to manufacture medicines is widely accepted. This is a tendency that applies for most of all non-food related sectors. Regarding the whole idea of green genetic engineering the general opinion is mostly driven by indecisiveness and skepticism. But besides this general tendency regarding genetic engineering, which often revolves around security considerations, it can be shown that differentiating views can be found for every aspects of its use. The present work also shows that green genetic engineering is not received as a particularly dangerous sector, rather compared with other risky sectors it usually ranks midfield.

Additionally the current work includes the results of a sales experiment featuring various genetically modified products. It turns out that these products are not being generally rejected, but that different products are being judged differently, despite a clear labeling concerning the use of genetically modified organisms. Besides seemingly extra sensitive products (especially in the food sector) there are products where the usage of genetic engineering receives broader acceptance. On the whole, “classical” sociodemographic factors do not seem to have any major influence. In conclusion this work shows how highly differentiated the various aspects and sectors of green genetic engineering are being received. Within this context this work is looking to contribute to the understanding of the heterogeneous state of research where situation-specific evaluations of genetic engineering in agriculture are captured.