

## Questions & Answers on licence DIR 118 – commercial release of genetically modified pima cotton

### What is this licence for?

Monsanto Australia Ltd (Monsanto) has received approval for the commercial release of a herbicide tolerant genetically modified (GM) cotton, referred to as Roundup Ready Flex<sup>®</sup> pima cotton (Roundup Ready Flex<sup>®</sup> MON 88913). The GM cotton may be grown in all cotton growing areas of Australia and its products can enter general commerce, including use in human food and animal feed.

### What is pima cotton?

Pima cotton is the common name for one species of cultivated cotton, *Gossypium barbadense*. Pima cotton, also known as Extra Long Staple or Egyptian cotton, produces a superior fibre to the more commonly grown *G. hirsutum* cotton. However, due to its lower yield, different climate requirements and longer growing season it only constitutes approximately 1% of the total Australian cotton crop.

### How has the GM cotton been modified?

Roundup Ready Flex<sup>®</sup> pima cotton contains two copies of a gene from a common soil bacterium conferring tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate. Conventional breeding was used to transfer the genetic modification from GM Roundup Ready Flex<sup>®</sup> *G. hirsutum* to pima cotton. Roundup Ready Flex<sup>®</sup> *G. hirsutum* is already commercially grown in Australia under licence DIR 066/2006.

### What is the purpose of the release?

The purpose of the release is to allow the commercial cultivation of the GM cotton. The introduced genes for herbicide tolerance enable the GM cotton plants to grow in the presence of the herbicide glyphosate, which can be used to control weeds in the GM cotton crop.

### Where will this GM cotton be grown?

As pima cotton is most suited to western NSW, it is likely that the GM cotton will be grown in this region. However, in the future, expansion could occur into areas in southern Queensland.

Commercial cultivation of GM cotton may be subject to restrictions in some Australian States and Territories for marketing reasons. It is important to note that these requirements do not relate to protection of human health or the environment, and are a matter for State and Territory governments and industry, not the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator). Further information should be obtained from the relevant State or Territory.

### What controls have been imposed for this GM cotton?

The licence is for an ongoing commercial release. The Regulator has not imposed any specific measures to manage risk, as the risk assessment concluded that this release of GM cotton poses negligible risks to the health and safety of people or the environment as a result of gene technology. However, general conditions have been imposed to ensure that there is ongoing oversight of the release.

### Want more information?

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the OGTR website under “What’s New”) or via Freecall 1800 181 030. These documents include the finalised RARMP, a Summary of the RARMP and the licence.

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