



Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

GTR06/01

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GENE TECHNOLOGY REGULATOR RECEIVES THREE NEW APPLICATIONS FOR DEALINGS INVOLVING INTENTIONAL RELEASE OF GMO COTTON

Three proposals for releases of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) into the environment have been received by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator. The licence applications have been lodged by CSIRO and Agriculture Western Australia, and they each propose a limited and controlled release of GM cotton. Details are provided in the attachment.

The new Gene Technology Regulator, Dr Sue Meek, would like to ensure that people have early notification of the receipt of these applications, and advise that they:

- ⇒ now have the opportunity to access information about the applications, including the applications themselves; and
- ⇒ will shortly have the opportunity to comment on the risk assessment and risk management plan being prepared by my office with input from State and Territory Governments, the Commonwealth Environment Minister, key Commonwealth agencies, the newly established Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee and local councils where the releases would occur, if approved.

This early notification is not required by the *Gene Technology Act 2000*, however, Dr Meek has decided, due to the significant public interest in GM trials in the past, it would be appropriate to provide early advice on the applications and the forthcoming public consultation process.

Dr Meek also advised that she expected to notify details of a further three licence applications early in the new year. If approved, these applications would involve limited and controlled releases of canola and oilseed poppies.

For further information on the applications or to request a copy of the applications ring the Hotline on 1800 181 030 or visit the website on www.ogtr.gov.au for summaries of the applications.

Media inquiries: John Noble, Media Adviser, OGTR
02 6289 5013, mobile 0413 890 241

Attachment

Background

The applications are for licences to undertake limited, controlled releases of genetically modified insect resistant (INGARD[®] and Bollgard II[®]) and insect resistant /herbicide tolerant (Bollgard II[®]/Roundup Ready[®]) cotton. The trials are to test the agronomic performance of the cotton and to produce seed for subsequent releases (which would be subject to further licence applications). The aims of the releases also include monitoring the effects of the GM cotton on insects in the crop, testing different strategies for integrated pest management, or examining the potential weediness of INGARD[®] cotton.

Under the former voluntary system overseen by the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee (GMAC), CSIRO, Agriculture Western Australia and other organisations conducted numerous similar release of INGARD[®] cotton. There have also been 17 previous trials involving Bollgard[®] II cotton (including 4 trials of Bollgard II[®]/Roundup Ready[®] cotton).

DIR 006/2001 - An application made by **CSIRO** in respect of **genetically modified cotton**: INGARD[®], Bollgard II[®] and Bollgard II[®]/Roundup Ready[®] cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum*). The application, if approved, would result in a limited release of the GMO, under controlled conditions. The application seeks approval to conduct trials in the Shires of Wyndham/East Kimberley in Western Australia, and at Katherine in the Northern Territory. 10 sites would be involved, covering a total of 210 hectares, to be planted in 2002.

DIR 008/2001 - An application made by **Agriculture Western Australia** in respect of **genetically modified cotton**: INGARD[®] cotton. The application, if approved, would result in a limited release of the GMO, under controlled conditions. The application seeks approval to conduct trials in the Shires of Broome, Wyndham/East Kimberley and West Kimberley in Western Australia. 30 sites would be involved, covering a total of 500 hectares to be planted in 2002.

DIR 009/2001 - An applications made by **Agriculture Western Australia** in respect of **genetically modified cotton**: Bollgard II[®] cotton. The application, if approved, would result in a limited release of the GMO, under controlled conditions. The application seeks approval to conduct trials in the Shires of Broome, Wyndham/East Kimberley and West Kimberley in Western Australia, on a total of 80 hectares, to be planted in 2002.