



Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMENTS SOUGHT ON FIRST APPLICATION FOR A TRIAL OF A GM CROP UNDER NEW LAWS.

The Acting Gene Technology Regulator (GTR), Liz Cain, is urging members of the public and interested organisations to provide comment on a draft risk management plan for a new application for a trial of a genetically modified crop - the first application accepted under the newly established Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR).

The application, by Cotton Seed Distributors Ltd, is for a two-year licence to trial genetically modified insect resistant cotton in Queensland.

Ms Cain said public comment on applications to trial genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is an important aspect of the new regulatory system now in place in Australia.

"The OGTR was recently established under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* to protect the health and safety of people, and the environment, by identifying risks posed by or as a result of gene technology, and to manage those risks through regulating dealings with GMO," Ms Cain said.

"Because this application for a field trial of a genetically modified crop is the first accepted under the new regulatory system, it is important we get it right by encouraging widespread comment on the draft risk assessment and management plan prepared by the OGTR on the application.

"We placed advertisements in national and Queensland media on Saturday, inviting people to comment on the draft plan.

"Advice has also been sought from state, territory and relevant local governments and from other Commonwealth agencies, as well as inviting comment from the Federal Environment Minister. Advice from the newly established Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee has also been sought," she said.

The application by Cotton Seed Distributors Ltd seeks approval to plant a maximum of 480 hectares of genetically modified cotton, made resistant to insect pests, over six sites in the shires of Emerald, Bourke and Balonne in Queensland.

"The application seeks approval to conduct a trial to enable evaluation of the agronomic performance of the cotton and production of seed," Ms Cain said.

"People will be asked to address their comments on risks to health and safety and to the environment, in line with the focus of the regulatory system.

"All comments on these issues will be taken into account by the Gene Technology Regulator in further developing the risk assessment and risk management plan for the genetically modified cotton application."

The draft risk assessment and risk management plan and summary information sheet are available on the OGTR website at www.ogtr.gov.au

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