

MEDIA RELEASE

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REGULATOR TODAY RELEASES INFORMATION ON 85 PER CENT OF AUSTRALIA'S GENE TECH CROP SITES

Of the 629 sites in Australia where genetically modified crops are being trialed, specific location details about 518 sites have been posted on the website of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator this afternoon.

This follows the midnight deadline last night (July 6th) which companies needed to meet if they wanted to apply for commercial in confidence status and not have their site details publicly known.

According to Ms Liz Cain, Acting Gene Technology Regulator, yesterday one of the biggest players in the trialing of genetically modified crops in Australia, Aventis CropSciences, advised her they would not be making applications for commercial-in-confidence status on any of their sites.

“This has resulted in the publication today of 283 sites operated by Aventis, which is a large slice of the GM market,” she said.

“The other company that operates a large share of the sites is Monsanto which progressively lodged applications for commercial in confidence for 80 of their sites in Australia during last week.

“Prior to the deadline of last night, some other companies had already made application for commercial-in-confidence in accordance with the provisions in the Gene Technology Act, passed by parliament in December last year.

“This has meant that today we have been able to release the details of around 83 per cent of all sites

“I must now formally assess the commercial-in-confidence applications which my office will progress as quickly as possible,” Ms Cain said.

“The tests for meeting the criteria for commercial-in-confidence status are extremely high and are premised on the clear intent of the legislation for public disclosure.

“Because a company applies for commercial confidentiality does not automatically mean they will be granted that status.”

Ms Cain said as companies’ applications are assessed, the results will immediately be placed on the GTR website.

“If I reject the application the site details will immediately be posted on the public record.

“If I decide that an applicant does have sound grounds for keeping their site details secret, I must make public my reasons and these will also be posted on the website.

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