



Australian Government

Department of Health

Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

January 2014

Summary of Variation Application to licence DIR 121

An application has been made under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* to vary a licence for the limited and controlled release of genetically modified (GM) safflower.

Licence DIR 121 is held by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The licence authorises the field trial of up to 190 lines of safflower genetically modified for increased levels of oleic acid. Oleic acid is a common component of vegetable oils and is produced in safflower seeds. The purpose of the trial is to evaluate the agronomic performance of the GM safflower under field conditions. The GM safflower is not permitted to enter human food or animal feed.

Licence DIR 121 currently authorises growing GM safflower at three sites in the ACT and NSW, on an area of up to 1 hectare per site. The duration of the field trial is three summer growing seasons, between September 2013 and March 2016.

In the current variation application, CSIRO seeks permission to grow GM safflower at an additional site in the shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley in Western Australia. The proposed site is within the Frank Wise Institute of the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia, near Kununurra. At this site, CSIRO proposes to grow GM safflower on an area of up to 1 hectare, during two winter growing seasons in 2014 and 2015.

The maximum cumulative area of the GM safflower release authorised by the existing licence is 7 hectares. In the current variation application, CSIRO does not propose to increase the maximum cumulative area of the GM safflower trial.

A condition of licence DIR 121 requires use of either bird scarers or bird netting to restrict predation of GM safflower seed by birds. At the new site near Kununurra, CSIRO proposes to use bird scarers and, as an additional control to deter bird predation, to plant a 10m wide buffer strip of sorghum surrounding the GM safflower. This is expected to act as a decoy crop, being a preferred food source for birds.

Further information relating to licence DIR 121, including the original Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP), a summary of the RARMP, the current licence conditions and a Questions and Answers document on the licence can be found on the [DIR 121 page](#) of the OGTR website (www.ogtr.gov.au).

Call for comment

The Regulator welcomes written submissions on the application to vary licence DIR 121, prior to making a decision on the application. The Regulator would particularly value comments on risks to the health and safety of people or the environment that may be posed by the proposed variation.

Written submissions are required by **7 March 2014** – please quote licence number **DIR 121**.

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