Australian Government
Department of Health
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

4 August 2014

Issue of licence DIR 128 to The University of Adelaide for a field trial of GM wheat and barley

On 16 April 2014, the Gene Technology Regulator invited submissions on the consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for licence application DIR 128 from The University of Adelaide.

The Regulator has issued a licence in respect of application DIR 128, authorising the limited and controlled release (field trial) of wheat and barley lines that have been genetically modified (GM) for abiotic stress tolerance or micronutrient uptake.

The release is authorised to take place between August 2014 and December 2019, with trial sites in five local government areas (LGAs), two in South Australia and three in Western Australia. Each trail site will be a maximum of 0.5 ha.

The primary purpose of the field trial is to assess whether the introduction and expression of a specified group of genes in plants affects yield potential under field conditions. The GM wheat and barley will not enter the human food or animal feed supply.

The decision to issue the licence was made after extensive consultation on the RARMP with the public, State and Territory governments, Australian Government agencies, the Minister for the Environment, the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee and relevant local councils, as required by the *Gene Technology Act 2000* and the corresponding State and Territory legislation.

Issues relating to the health and safety of people and the protection of the environment raised during the consultation process were considered in the context of current scientific information in reaching the conclusions set out in the finalised RARMP and in making the decision to issue the licence.

The finalised RARMP concludes that this limited and controlled release poses negligible risks to people and the environment. Licence conditions have been imposed to restrict spread and persistence of the GMOs and their genetic material in the environment and to limit the release in size, locations and duration, as these were important considerations in the evaluation process.

Appendix A of the RARMP summarises the advice received from prescribed experts, agencies and authorities, and indicates how issues raised relating to risks to human health and safety or the environment were considered in the document. Thirteen submissions were received from the public on the consultation RARMP and the issues raised, and their consideration, are summarised in Appendix B of the RARMP.

A Summary and the finalised RARMP, together with a set of Questions and Answers on this decision and a copy of the licence, can be obtained on-line from the DIR 128 page of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's website or requested via the contacts detailed below.

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