

## Questions & Answers on Licence DIR 069/2006 for Limited and Controlled Release of Genetically Modified Canola and Indian Mustard

### **What is this licence for?**

Bayer CropScience Pty Ltd has obtained approval for a limited and controlled release of genetically modified (GM) canola (*Brassica napus*) and Indian mustard (*B. juncea*) lines. The trial will take place on a maximum area of 252 hectares spread over up to 42 sites (8 sites per winter and 6 sites per summer season) of no more than 6 hectares per site over 6 seasons from 2007 to 2010. Potential sites have been identified in 24 shires in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria

### **How have the GM canola and Indian mustard been altered?**

The GM lines proposed for release contain introduced genes for herbicide tolerance and Bayer's novel hybrid breeding system which is also present in herbicide tolerant InVigor® canola (approved for commercial release in July 2003 under Licence DIR021/2002). The breeding system comprises GM male sterile (MS) and fertility restorer (Rf) lines and GM hybrid canola and Indian mustard lines are created by their conventional crossing.

### **What are the effects of the genetic modifications?**

The hybrid breeding system was developed to emulate the natural phenomenon of hybrid vigour when progeny of crosses of genetically distinct parents outperform the parental lines. The hybrid GM canola and Indian mustard lines may provide improved agronomic performance, including higher seed yield or oil content, than the MS and Rf parent lines or the non-GM plants from which they were derived. The herbicide tolerance of the GM lines was used to select GM plants during the initial stages in the laboratory and can be used for weed control during the field trial.

### **What is the purpose of the proposed trial?**

The purpose of the trial is to conduct research to evaluate agronomic traits (such as herbicide tolerance, germination efficiency, and flowering times) in the GM canola and Indian mustard lines and compare them with non-GM canola and Indian mustard and previously approved GM InVigor® canola lines under Australian cropping systems. Seeds collected during the trial would be shipped to Canada for further trait evaluation. Bayer envisages that seeds from promising GM lines may be assessed in future seasons in Australia (subject to further approvals). None of the GM plants materials, or their by-products, would be used for stock feed or human food.

### **What controls are proposed for this release?**

The Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) that was prepared for this application and formed the basis of the Regulator's decision to issue the licence concluded that the proposed release posed negligible risks to people or the environment. However, a range of licence conditions have been imposed to limit the release to the locations, size and duration proposed by the applicant as these were important considerations in the assessment process. They include measures to restrict the spread of the introduced genes; requiring that transport and storage of the GM plant materials are in accordance with OGTR guidelines; and monitoring for, and destroying, any volunteer plants on the release site for a minimum of 3 years (full details can be found in the licence, see below).

### **Want more information?**

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the OGTR website (<<http://www.ogtr.gov.au>> under "What's new") or via Freecall 1800 181 030. These documents include the complete RARMP (containing a summary of the submissions received through the consultation process with prescribed experts, agencies and authorities and the public), an Executive Summary, a Technical Summary and a copy of the full licence.