

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON LICENCE DIR 058/2005:
LIMITED & CONTROLLED RELEASE OF
GENETICALLY MODIFIED COTTONS

What is this licence for?

Deltapine Australia Pty Ltd (Deltapine) has obtained approval to undertake a small scale field trial with three genetically modified (GM) cotton lines (COT102, COT202 and COT203) to be grown under limited and controlled conditions.

How have the GM cottons been modified?

The GM cotton lines have been modified to be insect resistant by introducing a gene derived from a common soil bacterium. The protein produced by this gene is selectively toxic to the caterpillars of some lepidopterans (butterflies and moths) including the major pests of cotton.

When and where might the release occur?

The trial may take place in up to two shires during the 2005-06 summer growing season on up to two sites in shires of New South Wales (NSW) and central Queensland (QLD). Each site must not exceed half a hectare in size, ie a total maximum planting area of 1 hectare.

What is the purpose of the approved release?

During the field trial Deltapine will produce pure seed for use in future releases (which would require separate applications and approval processes).

Is this the first release of these GM cottons?

No. There have been five previous limited and controlled releases authorised for the COT102 GM cotton line in NSW, QLD and WA. One limited and controlled release of the COT202 and COT203 lines has previously been authorised for NSW and QLD. These releases ranged in size from 0.05 ha to 25 ha.

Field trials of the COT102 GM cotton line have been approved in the USA , India, Vietnam, Argentina, Brazil and China. Field trials of the COT202 and COT203 GM cotton lines have been approved in the USA.

Will any of the cotton from this trial be used for human food?

No. None of the cotton plants from the release, or their by-products, will be used in animal feed or human food in Australia (approval from Food Standards Australia New Zealand would be required before this could occur). However, the applicant intends to sell lint from the release for use in fabric, upholstery and other non-food products. Processed lint does not contain genetic material or protein.

What controls have been imposed for this release?

A range of licence conditions have been imposed to minimise the exposure of people and other organisms to the GM cotton lines and to limit the spread and persistence of the GMOs and their introduced genes. These conditions include: limiting the size and duration of the release; using pollen traps; ensuring the sites are at least 50 m from natural waterways; transport and storage of GM cotton plants or seeds in accordance with OGTR guidelines; and monitoring the trial sites after harvest so that any cotton plants that germinate or regrow can be destroyed. Monitoring would continue for at least 12 months and until no GM plants emerge for six consecutive months. Full details of the licence conditions are set out in the

final version of 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 this licence.

A number of documents 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 expert groups and the public), an Executive Summary, a Technical Summary and the full Licence.

OGTR October 2005