

## **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON LICENCE DIR 064/2006**

### **LIMITED & CONTROLLED RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED COTTON**

#### **What is this application for?**

Monsanto Australia Ltd has obtained approval to undertake a small scale release of up to 24 cotton lines, each genetically modified with a different gene that is expected to enhance water use efficiency. The release will take place under limited and controlled conditions on up to 10 sites of up to 2 hectares (ie a maximum total area of 20 hectares) during each of the summer growing seasons of 2006/07 and 2007/08 in a number of shires in New South Wales and Queensland.

#### **How has the GM cotton been altered?**

The GM cotton lines contain 1 of 24 different introduced genes. Twenty three of the genes are derived from the plants thale cress, corn, soybean, rice and cotton. One gene is derived from a common bacterium. The GM cotton lines also contain either a herbicide tolerance gene or an antibiotic resistance gene that were used as markers to select modified plants during initial research and development work in the laboratory.

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

The genetic modifications are intended to enable the GM cotton plants to grow normally with less water (improved water use efficiency).

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

The aim of the trial is to conduct preliminary ('proof of concept') research to assess the effect of the introduced genes on some aspects of the agronomic performance of the GM cotton lines (yield and fibre quality) under different irrigation treatments. Seed will be collected from the GM cotton lines for further studies and possible future trials of promising lines (subject to separate applications and approvals).

#### **What controls have been applied to 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 poses 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 GM plant materials; ensuring that transport and storage of the GMOs are in accordance with OGTR guidelines; and monitoring for, and destroying, any cotton plants on the release site for at least twelve months after harvest. In addition, none of the GM plant materials are permitted to be used for any other purpose (eg human food, animal feed or fabric production).

#### **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.