

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON LICENCE DIR 065/2006: LIMITED & CONTROLLED RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED COTTON

What is this application for?

Deltapine Australia Pty Ltd has obtained approval to undertake a small scale, limited and controlled release of up to 11 insect resistant GM cotton lines. The release will take place at one site in the shire of Narrabri NSW on a maximum total area of 1.5 hectares over the summer season of 2006/07.

How has the GM cotton been altered?

The GM cotton lines contain two genes derived from a common soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* either alone or in combination. Some of the GM cotton lines also contain an antibiotic resistance marker gene which helped identify and select modified plants during their early stage development in the laboratory.

What are the effects of the genetic modification?

The introduced genes encode different proteins with different modes of action that are both specifically toxic to caterpillars of some lepidopteran insects (butterflies and moths), including cotton bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*) and/or budworm (*H. punctigera*) which are the major pests of cotton crops in Australia.

What is the purpose of the release?

The introduced genes are different to those in commercially available insect resistant GM cottons. The aim of the proposed release is to conduct early stage research and to produce seed from the GM cotton lines for use in further studies in future trials (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 posed negligible risks to people or the environment. However, a range of licence conditions have been imposed to limit the release to the size, location 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; ensuring that transport and storage of the GM plant materials 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 as human food or for animal feed.

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, and a Technical Summary and a copy of the full licence.