

## **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON LICENCE DECISION DIR 086/2008 FOR LIMITED & CONTROLLED RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED MAIZE (CORN)**

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

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has gained approval to trial, under limited and controlled conditions, up to 11 genetically modified maize (corn) lines. The field trial will take place on up to 750 m<sup>2</sup> at one site in the Australian Capital Territory. The same site could be re-planted with GM maize for up to five growing seasons from 2008-13.

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

The purpose of the trial is to conduct basic research to investigate the function of maize genes and how it impacts on the growth and other characteristics of maize. No GM plant material from the trial can be used in human food, animal feed or the manufacture of any maize product.

### **How have the GM maize (corn) lines been modified?**

The GM maize lines contain a modified version of a genetic element known as a transposable genetic element. Under certain conditions, this modified transposable element can move within the maize genome. If the introduced transposable element moves into a part of the genome that controls the expression of a particular gene, that gene may be over-expressed. The over-expression of the gene is used as a tag or marker, which helps to identify that gene for further investigation of its function. The offspring of the GM maize lines would be assessed for characteristics that are different from the parent plants.

The GM maize lines also contain genetic marker genes from common bacteria.

### **What controls have been imposed for this release?**

The Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for this application concluded that the release poses negligible risks to people and the environment. However, licence conditions have been imposed to restrict the release to the size, location and duration requested by the applicant as these were important considerations in the assessment process. As well as limits on the scale of the release, control measures have been proposed to restrict the spread and persistence of the GMOs and the introduced genetic material. These include removing the male flowers so that pollen can not be produced in the field; carrying out the release within an area that is enclosed above and on all sides with chicken wire mesh to limit exposure of animals; transporting and storing the GM plant materials in accordance with OGTR guidelines. The licence also requires monitoring for, and destruction of, any maize plants on the release site for at least twelve months after harvest - until no volunteers are detected for at least six continuous months.

### **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 finalised RARMP, an Executive Summary, a Technical Summary and a copy of the full licence.