

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON LICENCE DECISION DIR 090 FOR COMMERCIAL RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ROSE

What is this licence for?

Florigene Pty Ltd (Florigene) has received approval for the commercial release of one line of genetically modified (GM) Hybrid Tea rose (*Rosa x hybrida*) into the Australian environment.

What is the purpose of the release?

The purpose of the release is the ongoing commercial propagation of parent plants and the growing of plants for cut-flowers. Florigene intends to grow GM rose plants and handle their products (ie cut-flowers) in the same manner as non-GM rose plants. Parent plants and plants for cut-flowers will be grown by commercial growers registered with Florigene. Flowers that are produced will be sold through normal commercial distribution channels to the public, Australia-wide.

How has the GM rose line been modified?

The GM rose line contains two genes, derived from the plants viola and torenia, that have been shown to alter flower colour from pink to purple/blue. The same or similar genes are naturally widespread in the environment and are responsible for the production of delphinidin, a blue pigment found in a range of edible plants including blueberries and blackcurrants.

The GM rose line also contains an antibiotic resistance selectable marker gene, which was used to identify transformed plants during initial development of GM plants in the laboratory. This gene is from a common gut bacterium.

The nature of the genetic modification means that pollen produced by the flowers does not contain any of the introduced genes.

What controls have been imposed on this release?

The Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for this application concluded that the proposed release poses negligible risks to people and the environment, and that specific risk treatment measures are not required. Nonetheless, general licence conditions have been imposed to ensure that there is ongoing oversight of the release. These conditions relate to ongoing licence holder suitability, auditing and monitoring, and reporting requirements which include an obligation to report any unintended effects.

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.