

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON LICENCE DECISION DIR 105 FOR LIMITED & CONTROLLED RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA

What is this licence for?

Monsanto Australia Ltd (Monsanto) has received approval to trial, under limited and controlled conditions, a new genetically modified (GM) canola. The field trial will take place over four years, from March 2011 to December 2014, with up to 2 sites in the first year, 8 sites in the second and third years, and 20 sites in the fourth year. Sites will be a maximum area of 4 ha in the first year and 10 ha in subsequent years, and will be located in canola growing regions in 46 possible local government areas (LGAs) in New South Wales, 28 possible LGAs in Victoria and 53 possible LGAs in Western Australia. The exact site locations will be selected closer to planting.

What is the purpose of the trial?

The purpose of the trial is to conduct experiments to evaluate the agronomic performance of the GM canola line, including performance of the introduced herbicide tolerance trait, under field conditions. Material from the GM canola will not be used in human food or animal feed.

How has the GM canola line been modified?

The GM canola line contains a gene derived from a common soil bacterium that is expected to enable the GM canola plants to continue growing in the presence of glyphosate. Herbicides containing glyphosate could then be used for weed control in the GM canola crop.

The GM canola in this release differs from the commercially released Roundup Ready[®] canola as it is expected to tolerate higher rates of glyphosate herbicides and have a wider time window for herbicide application.

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, a range of licence conditions have been imposed to limit the release to the size, locations 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 imposed to restrict the spread and persistence of the GMO and the introduced genetic material. These include: ensuring that the GM canola is isolated from non-GM canola and other related plants; cleaning of equipment used in connection with the GM plants; transport and storage of the GM plant materials in accordance with the Regulator's guidelines; inspections around release sites; post-harvest cleaning of release sites; and monitoring the release sites for at least two years after harvest, during which time any volunteer plants found must be destroyed.

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.