

Questions & Answers on licence DIR 163 – field trial of genetically modified (GM) canola

What does this licence allow?

A licence has been issued to Nuseed to grow canola plants that have been genetically modified for altered oil content and herbicide tolerance. The trial can take place for 5 years, in sites to be selected from 95 possible local government areas in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, on a maximum area of 150 ha per year.

How have the GM canola plants been modified?

Canola seeds naturally produce short-chain omega-3 oils. The GM canola has been modified to produce long chain omega-3 fatty acids by introducing a number of genes from other organisms that naturally produce them. Long chain omega-3 fatty acids are considered to have health benefits for humans.

The GM canola may also contain two selectable marker genes, which were used to select GM plants during initial development in the laboratory, and a herbicide tolerance gene.

What is the purpose of the trial?

The trial is to gather data under field conditions for agronomic performance, oil profile and content, nutritional assessment, compositional analysis, molecular analysis and genetic stability. The GM canola grown in this field trial would not be used in commercial human food and animal feed.

What controls are imposed for this release?

The Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for this application concludes that the field trial poses negligible risks to people or the environment. However, as this is a field trial, the applicant must fulfil a range of licence conditions that control when and where the trial can take place, limit the size of the trial and put restrictions on any canola leaving the trial site. For example, there are licence conditions to minimise dispersal of the GMOs and GM pollen from the trial site, to securely transport and store the GM canola, and to inspect the site at the end of the trial to check that the GM plants are destroyed. Full details of these control measures are in the licence.

Want more information?

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the [DIR 163](#) page of the OGTR website or via Freecall 1800 181 030. These documents include the finalised RARMP, a summary of the RARMP and the licence.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

Tel: 1800 181 030 E-mail: ogtr@health.gov.au

[OGTR Website](#)