



December 2008

## **FACT SHEET**

### **GM CROPS AND STOCKFEED**

The *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the GT Act) regulates dealings with live and viable genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In licensing dealings with GMOs, the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator) must be satisfied that any risks can be managed to protect human health and safety and the environment. If required, the Regulator can impose conditions on licensed GMOs in relation to products (such as stockfeed) derived from the GMOs.

Currently, only two genetically modified (GM) broadacre crops are approved for commercial release in Australia - GM cotton and GM canola. The approved GM cotton and GM canola lines have been assessed to be as safe as their conventional counterparts and may be used in the same manner, including for stockfeed.

#### **Domestic GM Stockfeed**

##### *Commercially Released GMOs*

Most stockfeed used in Australia is derived from domestically grown crops.

**GM cotton** has been grown commercially in Australia since 1996 and in 2007 made up 90% of the Australian cotton crop. GM cottonseed and meal are used as a supplement in stockfeed.

**GM canola** was grown commercially in Australia for the first time in 2008, in New South Wales and Victoria. Meal from this GM canola may be used for stockfeed.

For the approved GM cotton lines (Bollgard<sup>®</sup> II, INGARD<sup>®</sup>, Roundup Ready<sup>®</sup>, Roundup Ready Flex<sup>®</sup> and Liberty Link<sup>®</sup>) and GM canola lines (In Vigor<sup>®</sup> and Roundup Ready<sup>®</sup>) the Regulator concluded that they are as safe as conventional varieties and are able to be used in the same manner as conventional cotton and canola. This includes use for stockfeed. The Regulator's conclusions were based on comprehensive risk assessment and risk management plans (RARMPs) which included an evaluation of potential toxicity of the GMOs to humans or other organisms, including stock and wild animals. The full RARMPs are available from the GMO Record on the OGTR website ([www.ogtr.gov.au](http://www.ogtr.gov.au)) or on request from the OGTR (freecall 1800 181030).

It is important to note that some crops, whether GM or not, are not appropriate for use as animal feed in all situations. For example, it is not recommended that cottonseed be fed to non-ruminant animals because it naturally contains the toxin gossypol.

Food derived from the GM cotton and canola lines approved for commercial release by the Regulator have also been approved for human consumption by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). To manage the potential risks of GM crops entering the human food supply without being approved for human consumption by FSANZ, the Regulator has developed a split approvals policy.

Under this policy, if a GM crop were approved for commercial release by the Regulator but human food derived from this crop was not approved by FSANZ, the Regulator would impose a licence condition preventing use of this crop as stockfeed. Further information on the split approvals policy is available from the OGTR website: <http://www.ogtr.gov.au/internet/ogtr/publishing.nsf/Content/policies-1>.

### *Limited and Controlled Release of GMOs (Field Trials)*

The Regulator has approved a number of limited and controlled releases (field trials) into the environment of a variety of GM crops. Licences for limited and controlled releases incorporate measures to restrict the dissemination and persistence of the GMO and its genetic material in the environment. Only those dealings permitted by the licence may be undertaken. Conditions of limited and controlled releases generally preclude GMOs or GM material from the trials entering the commercial food or feed supply.

### **Import Of Live And Viable GMOs For Stockfeed**

Occasionally grains such as soybean, canola and maize are imported in bulk into Australia for processing and stockfeed use.

Import of live and viable GMOs, including GM grains, into Australia requires authorisation under the GT Act. Import of grain requires the relevant approval from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS). AQIS may impose conditions on import of some commodities for quarantine reasons.

If a bulk shipment contains GM grains not approved for commercial release in Australia, authorisation from the Regulator is required. Authorisation is by a licence from the Regulator for GMO Dealings Not Involving Intentional Release (DNIR). DNIRs take place under specified physical containment conditions. The Regulator must prepare a RARMP for each DNIR application to identify any risks to human health and safety and the environment. The Regulator may impose conditions to manage any identified risks.

To date, the Regulator has issued five DNIR licences for import into Australia of GM soy (2), maize (2) and canola (1) grain destined for processing and subsequent stockfeed use. Licence conditions imposed to prevent accidental release of live and viable GMOs to the environment included: precautions against spillage; transport of the grain in sealed vehicles; and processing of the grain to render it unviable.

### **Labelling And Marketing Issues**

The Regulator has not imposed any labeling requirements for the GM grains authorized for commercial release or import. Marketing issues regarding the GM/non-GM status of stockfeed, including labeling, are generally managed by industry. Further information should be obtained from the relevant industry organization.

A number of States and Territories have specific legislative requirements in relation to the marketing of GM crops and grains. It is important to note that these requirements do not relate to protection of human health or the environment and are a matter for State and Territory governments, not the Regulator. Further information should be obtained from the relevant State or Territory.