Australian Government
Department of Health
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

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Issue of licence DIR 151 to CSIRO for the limited and controlled release of GM wheat

On 8 February 2017, the Gene Technology Regulator invited submissions on the consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for licence application DIR 151 from CSIRO.

The Regulator has now issued a licence in response to application DIR 151, authorising the limited and controlled release (field trial) of wheat genetically modified (GM) for disease resistance, drought tolerance, altered oil content and altered grain composition.

The field trial is authorised to take place at two sites of up to 1 hectare each at Ginninderra Experiment Station, Australian Capital Territory and Boorowa Experiment Station, Shire of Boorowa, New South Wales, for a period of five years. The purpose of the field trial is to assess the agronomic characteristics of the GM wheat under field conditions. The GM wheat would not be used for commercial human food or animal feed.

The Regulator's decision to issue the licence was made after consultation on the RARMP with the public, State and Territory governments, Australian Government agencies, the Minister for the Environment, the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee and local councils, as required by the *Gene Technology Act 2000* and the corresponding State and Territory legislation.

The Regulator considered all submissions provided during the consultation process that related to the health and safety of people or the protection of the environment. The comments were considered in the context of current scientific information and used in finalising the RARMP. The finalised RARMP informed the Regulator's decision to issue the licence.

The finalised RARMP concludes that this limited and controlled release poses negligible risks to people and the environment and does not require specific risk treatment measures. However, licence conditions have been imposed to restrict spread and persistence of the GMOs and their genetic material in the environment and to limit the release in size, location and duration, as these were important considerations in the evaluation process.

Appendix A of the RARMP summarises the advice received from prescribed experts, agencies and authorities, and indicates how issues raised relating to risks to human health and safety or the environment were considered in preparing and finalising the document. One submission was received from the public on the consultation RARMP and the issues raised, and their consideration, are summarised in Appendix B of the RARMP.

The finalised RARMP, together with a summary of the RARMP, a set of Questions and Answers on this decision and a copy of the licence, can be obtained on-line from the DIR 151 page of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's website or requested via the contacts detailed below.

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