

Questions & Answers on licence DIR 152 – field trial of genetically modified (GM) wheat and barley

What does this licence allow?

The University of Adelaide has received approval from the Gene Technology Regulator to grow GM wheat and barley plants in a field trial. The field trial is permitted to take place at up to five sites, on a maximum of 3.75 hectares per growing season (across all sites) in South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales, between July 2017 and January 2021.

How have the GM wheat and barley plants been modified?

The genetic modifications are expected to lead to enhanced yield or frost tolerance. Some GM wheat plants will contain up to three introduced genes for yield enhancement, derived from rice and thale cress. Other GM wheat lines will contain one of seven genes for frost tolerance, derived from common sources to which humans and animals are routinely exposed. GM barley lines will contain one of two genes for frost tolerance (a subset of the genes introduced to GM wheat).

What is the purpose of the trial?

The purpose of the field trial is to assess the agronomic characteristics of the GM wheat and barley plants under field conditions. The GM wheat and barley would not be used for commercial human food or animal feed.

What controls are imposed on this release?

The Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for this application concludes that the proposed release poses negligible risks to people or the environment. However, a range of licence conditions will limit the size, location and duration of the release, as well as restrict the spread and persistence of the GM wheat or barley and the introduced genetic material. Control measures include conditions to ensure secure transport and storage of the GMOs, and at the end of the trial require inspection of the site for wheat and barley volunteers to ensure all GM plants are destroyed. A full list of the control measures is detailed in the licence.

Want more information?

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the [DIR 152 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.

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