Australian Government
Department of Health
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

25 July 2017

Issue of licence DIR 153 to the University of Queensland for the limited and controlled release of GM sorghum

On 15 May 2017, the Gene Technology Regulator invited submissions on the consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for licence application DIR 153 from the University of Queensland.

The Regulator has now issued a licence in response to application DIR 153, authorising the limited and controlled release (field trial) of sorghum genetically modified (GM) for grain quality traits and increased yield.

The field trial is authorised to take place between October 2017 and June 2020 in south-east Queensland. In the first year, one site may be planted with an area of up to 1 hectare. In each of the second and third years up to 4 sites may be planted with a combined area of up to 5 hectares. The purpose of the field trial is to assess the agronomic characteristics, yield and grain quality of the GM sorghum plants under field conditions. A poultry feeding trial may be conducted to assess nutritional value of the GM sorghum. The GM sorghum would not be used for human food or animal feed other than in the proposed poultry feeding trial.

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. Four submissions were 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 153 page of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's website or requested via the contacts detailed below.

Office of the Gene Technology Regulator
MDP 54 GPO Box 9848 CANBERRA ACT 2601 Tel: 1800 181 030 E-mail: ogtr@health.gov.au
OGTR website (www.ogtr.gov.au)