

## **Questions & Answers on licence DIR 157 – Commercial release of genetically modified cotton**

### **What does this licence allow?**

The Gene Technology Regulator has issued a licence to Syngenta Australia Pty Ltd that permits cultivation of one kind of genetically modified (GM) cotton in Australia. The GM cotton has been modified for insect resistance. The GM cotton and its products can enter general commerce, including use in human food or animal feed.

### **Where will this cotton be grown?**

Farmers may grow the GM cotton anywhere in Australia, subject to restrictions in some Australian States and Territories for marketing reasons. Commercial cotton production occurs mainly in New South Wales, southern and central Queensland, and northern Victoria.

### **How has the GM cotton been modified?**

The GM cotton contains an introduced gene for insect resistance. This gene is derived from a common soil bacterium. The gene encodes a protein that is toxic to specific pest insects that cause major yield losses in cotton crops.

The GM cotton also contains a selectable marker gene from a common gut bacterium. This gene confers antibiotic resistance. It was used to select plants during laboratory development of the GM cotton and does not have any function when plants are grown in the field.

### **How is this GM cotton different from existing commercial GM cotton?**

In 2016/17 most of the Australian cotton crop was planted to GM Bollgard®3 varieties, which contain three insecticidal genes. The GM cotton covered by this new licence contains one of the insect resistance genes present in Bollgard®3.

Some existing commercial GM cotton varieties have introduced genes for herbicide tolerance. The GM cotton authorised by the new licence is not modified for herbicide tolerance.

### **Has this GM cotton received any other approvals in Australia?**

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is responsible for food safety. FSANZ has approved the use of food derived from this GM cotton.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has regulatory responsibility for agricultural chemicals, including insecticidal products. APVMA has approved the insecticidal protein in the GM cotton for commercial scale release.

### **What controls have been imposed for this GM cotton?**

The licence is for an ongoing commercial release. The Regulator has not imposed any specific measures to manage risk, as the risk assessment concluded that this release of the GM cotton poses negligible risks to the health and safety of people or the environment. However, general conditions have been imposed to ensure that there is ongoing oversight of the release.

### **Want more information?**

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the [DIR 157](#) page of the OGTR website or via Freecall 1800 181 030. These documents include the finalised Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP), a summary of the RARMP and the licence.