Australian Government
Department of Health
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

6 March 2018

**Issue of licence DIR 160 to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) for the limited and controlled release of GM perennial ryegrass**

On 7 December 2017, the Gene Technology Regulator invited submissions on the consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for licence application DIR 160 from DEDJTR.

The Regulator has now issued a licence in response to application DIR 160, authorising the limited and controlled release (field trial) of perennial ryegrass genetically modified (GM) for fructan biosynthesis.

The field trial is authorised to take place between May 2018 and June 2020 near Hamilton, Victoria on a maximum area of 160 $m^2$ per year. The purpose of the field trial is to assess the agronomic characteristics and to multiply seed for possible future trials. The GM perennial ryegrass grown in this field trial would not be used for 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 the health and safety of 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. No submissions were received from the public on the consultation 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 160 page of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's website or requested via the contacts detailed below.

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