

Questions & Answers on licence DIR 160 – field trial of genetically modified (GM) perennial ryegrass

What does this licence allow?

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (Victoria) has received approval from the Gene Technology Regulator to grow GM perennial ryegrass plants in a field trial. The field trial is permitted to take place between May 2018 and June 2020 in south-west Victoria on a maximum area of 160 m².

How have the GM perennial ryegrass plants been modified?

Two genes, both derived from perennial ryegrass, have been introduced into the GM perennial ryegrass plants. The genetic modifications lead to increased plant nutritional quality and biomass production.

All the GM plants will also contain an introduced antibiotic resistance gene from a common gut bacterium. This was used as a selectable marker during development of the GM plants in the laboratory.

What is the purpose of the trial?

The purpose of the field trial is to assess the agronomic characteristics of the GM perennial ryegrass plants under field conditions and to multiply seed for future trials. The GM plants grown in this field trial would not be used in human food or animal feed.

What controls are imposed on this release?

A range of licence conditions have been imposed to limit the size, location and duration of the release, and to require training for all people who work with the GM perennial ryegrass. Control measures include conditions to minimise dispersal of GM seed and GM pollen by growing the GM perennial ryegrass plants in a plastic and steel mesh polyhouse which is surrounded by a monitoring and isolation zone, to securely transport and store the GM seed, and to inspect the trial site after completion of the trial 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 160 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.

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