

Questions & Answers on licence DIR 178 – commercial release of genetically modified (GM) canola

What does this licence allow?

BASF Australia Ltd has received an approval under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* for commercial cultivation of the genetically modified (GM) canola lines containing introduced genes for herbicide tolerance and a hybrid breeding system.

The GM canola lines and their products would enter general commerce, including use in human food and animal feed.

How has the GM canola been modified?

The four approved GM canola lines have been conventionally bred from previously approved GM canola lines and have the combined introduced genes and traits from those parents. The GM parental lines have been authorised for commercial release under licences DIR 021/2002, DIR 127 and DIR 175.

The GM canola lines contain introduced genes for a hybrid breeding system and a gene that confers tolerance to herbicides containing glufosinate. A hybrid breeding system allows different types of parent canola to be crossed to make hybrid GM plants with desired properties and prevents the parent canola plants self-fertilising. Two of the GM canola lines also contains a gene that confers tolerance to herbicides containing glyphosate. Thus, farmers can use two herbicides to kill weeds without damaging their crop.

The introduced genes are all derived from common bacteria.

Where will this GM canola be grown?

The GM canola is allowed to be grown in all canola growing areas in Australia, subject to restrictions in some Australian States and Territories for marketing reasons. Commercial canola production occurs mainly in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, with sporadic plantings in Queensland and Tasmania. Currently, the commercial cultivation of GM canola is prohibited by State law in Tasmania and parts of South Australia.

Has this GM canola 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 the parental GM canola lines. These approvals also cover the GM canola lines approved under DIR 178, as they are derived from the approved parental lines through conventional breeding.

What controls have been imposed for this GM canola?

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 GM canola poses negligible risk to the health and safety of people or the environment. 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 178](#) 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.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator
Tel: 1800 181 030 E-mail: ogtr@health.gov.au
[OGTR Website](#)