



Ongoing monitoring of the safety of GM crops in Australia



Commercial GM crops

In Australia, farmers can only grow a genetically modified (GM) crop if the crop has been approved by the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator). You can read about all commercial GM crops that are authorised in Australia in the [GMO Record](#).

When a company applies for a licence for a commercial GM crop, the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) conducts a thorough, science-based risk analysis. The OGTR also seeks advice from experts, government agencies, and the public.

The Regulator only approves a commercial GM crop if the risk analysis finds that the GM crop is safe for people and the environment.

The risk analysis for a GM crop is based on the information available at the time of the assessment. However, the OGTR continues to monitor the safety of commercial GM crops after approval, in case any new information emerges. This process is known as post-release review.

The Regulator monitors the ongoing safety of GM crops in four ways.

1. Information from licence holder

A company holding a licence for a GM crop is legally required to tell the Regulator if there are any unintended effects or adverse impacts from the GM crop. Criminal charges can apply if a licence holder is aware of relevant information but does not report it.

Licence holders must make an annual report about their activities with

commercial GM crops. The Regulator can also direct a licence holder to collect information or conduct research on their GM crop and report back on their findings.

2. Information from public

Any member of the public can report suspected harm resulting from a GM crop to the OGTR. The OGTR's Monitoring and Compliance team investigates all credible reports of harm. OGTR inspectors have the power to inspect and audit any activities with GM crops.

3. Information from new literature

The OGTR monitors scientific literature and other information sources relevant to GM crops. The OGTR carefully considers any new studies regarding potential harm from GM crops to see if the new information affects the safety assessment of any current commercial GM crops.

If new information raises a question that is not answered by the literature, the Regulator can also commission research to address this uncertainty.

4. Review of risk analysis

A review of the risk analysis for a GM crop considers all available new information about the GM crop since the previous risk analysis. It includes evaluation of scientific literature, worldwide experience with cultivation of the GM crop and information supplied by the licence holder.

A risk analysis may be reviewed at any time if there are questions about the ongoing safety of a particular GM crop. The OGTR also reviews the risk analysis for every commercial GM crop after the crop has been grown in Australia for some time.

These risk analysis reviews are often done while evaluating a new variety of GM crop, developed from a previous variety that was approved by the Regulator. Information about the previously approved GM crop is reviewed in the new risk analysis. For example, the risk analysis for [Bollgard® 3](#) GM cotton reviewed information about [Bollgard® 2](#) GM cotton.

What if risks change?

If the post-release review of a commercial GM crop discovers new risks, the Regulator has the power to vary, suspend or revoke the licence to grow the crop.

To date, no new information has come to light to indicate that any GM crop grown commercially in Australia is unsafe.

Related OGTR factsheets:

Genetically modified (GM) crops in Australia

Reporting misuse of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

How we regulate the intentional release of GM crops and other GMOs into the environment

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