Australian Government
Department of Health
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

6 January 2022

Summary of Licence Application DIR 189

The University of Queensland has made an application under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the Act) for Dealings involving the Intentional Release (DIR) of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into the Australian environment.

Project Title	Limited and controlled release of sorghum genetically modified for asexual seed formation[1]
Parent organism	Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*)
Genetic modifications	
Introduced genes and modified traits:	Expression of a grass gene[2] involved in altering the reproduction mode of sorghum from sexual to asexual
Genetic modification method	*Agrobacterium*-mediated
Number of lines	Up to 10 independent lines comprising of RTx430 and other sorghum cultivars
Principal purpose	To assess agronomic characteristics, seed viability, gene persistence, yield and yield components and grain quality of the GM sorghum plants under field conditions
Previous releases	There have been no previous releases of the GMOs
Proposed limits	
Proposed use of GM plants	No use in human food or animal feed is proposed
Proposed location	The trial is proposed to take place at the University of Queensland's Gatton Campus - Crop Research Unit
Proposed release size	Up to 1 ha per year
Proposed period of release	From September 2022 to June 2025

[1] The title of the project as supplied by the applicant is 'Limited and controlled release of *Sorghum bicolor* genetically modified for altered reproduction from sexual to asexual'

[2] Confidential Commercial Information: The details of the introduced gene are the subject of an application for declaration as Confidential Commercial Information under section 185 of the Act. This information will be made available to the prescribed experts and agencies that will be consulted on this application. CCI is not available to the public.

Proposed Controls include:

- restricting access to the trial site by people and animals
- limiting gene flow to non-GM plants through the use of monitoring and isolation zones
- limiting gene flow to non-GM plants by bagging sorghum heads
- locating the proposed trial sites at least 100 m away from the nearest natural waterway
- ensuring GM seeds and plant material are contained during transport and storage in accordance with the Regulator's guidelines
- ensuring that GM plants do not remain after harvest through regular inspection of the trial site and destruction of any sorghum found before flowering.

Consideration as a limited and controlled release (field trial)

This application is considered to be a limited and controlled release application under section 50A of the Act, as the Regulator was satisfied that:

- its principal purpose is to enable the applicant to conduct experiments; and
- the applicant has proposed limits and controls that are of a kind that the Regulator is not required to consult before preparing the consultation version of the RARMP.

Next steps

The Gene Technology legislation sets out what the Regulator must do, as well as what the Regulator can or must consider, before deciding whether or not to issue a licence for this application.

The Regulator's staff will prepare a consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) considering aspects of the application including the proposed limits and controls in accordance with the legislation.

The Regulator will seek comment on the consultation RARMP from the public, as well as a wide range of experts, agencies and authorities. The public and experts will be invited to provide submissions on the risks to human health and safety, and on risks to the environment from the proposed release.

At this stage, the consultation RARMP is expected to be released for comment in April 2022.

After consultation, the Regulator's staff will finalise the RARMP, taking into account advice on relevant matters. The finalised RARMP will form the basis of the Regulator's decision whether or not to issue a licence. The consultation and final versions of the RARMP and associated documents will be available on the OGTR website when they are released.

Other information available from the OGTR website:

- documents on genetic modification methods and selectable marker genes
- information on Australia's national scheme for regulation of gene technology and
- information on the DIR application process.

Please use the contact details below, if you

- would like a copy of the application. Please include the identifier DIR 189.
- have any questions about the application or the legislated evaluation process or
- wish to register on the mailing list.

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