

## Questions & Answers on a determination to place dealings with cut flowers for genetically modified (GM) carnations on the GMO Register REG-002

### What is the GMO Register?

Licensed activities with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) - dealings - may be included on the GMO Register if the Gene Technology Regulator (the Regulator) is satisfied that any risks posed by them are minimal and that the dealings are safe enough for anyone to undertake them without the need for a licence.

### What dealings with GMOs are to be included?

The dealings to be included on the GMO Register are import, transport and disposal of cut flowers of three GM carnations. Inclusion to the register will enable commercial import and distribution of the cut flowers throughout Australia, however no growing of the carnations is permitted. These dealings have been authorised under the licence for DIR 134 since 2015.

### How have the GM carnations been modified?

The three GM carnations – marketed as Moonaqua™, Moonberry™ and Moonvelvet™ - included in this proposal each contain introduced genes for altered flower colour. The genes, which come from common flowering plants, enable carnations to produce blue/purple flowers, a colour that does not otherwise occur in carnations.

The GM carnations also contain a selectable marker gene from a common plant source. This gene confers herbicide tolerance, which was used to select plants during laboratory development of the GM carnations.

### Have there been any adverse effects from the commercial release of the GM carnations?

The GM carnations have a history of safe use in Australia since the dealings were licensed for commercial release under DIR 134 in 2015. No adverse effects have been reported by the licence holder through their reporting requirements for DIR 134, or by other people in Australia. The GM carnations have also been authorised for cultivation, or for import as cut flowers, in a number of other countries for over a decade. No adverse effects from the carnations have been reported in those countries.

### Have the risks associated with the dealings with GM carnations been assessed?

The risks were initially assessed for the application for licence DIR 134. In response to the application to place the dealings with GM carnations on the GMO Register, an updated Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) was prepared.

The updated RARMP was open for comment from the public, from industry and experts, and from Federal, State and Territory, and local governments and agencies. Any issues relating to the health and safety of people and the environment that were raised during the consultation were considered in finalising the RARMP, however no information was received during consultation that indicated any new risks or any risk estimates greater than negligible. The RARMP concluded that there is minimal risk to the health and safety of people and the environment, from dealings with the GM carnations. The final RARMP was used to provide information for the Regulator in making the decision to include the dealings on the GMO Register.

### What are the next steps in including dealings on the GMO Register?

The Regulator has made a decision under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* – a determination – to include the dealings with GM carnations on the GMO Register. The determination will come into effect on 17 July 2020. Once the determination commences, it will not be necessary for people conducting the dealings with these GM carnations to hold or be covered by a GM licence.

### Where can I find more information?

The final RARMP for REG-002 and a link to the determination can be found on the [OGTR website](#) under 'What's New'. "*The biology of Dianthus caryophyllus L. (carnation)*" is also [available](#) on the OGTR website.