Questions & Answers on licence application DIR 188 – field trial of genetically modified (GM) canola and Indian mustard

What is this application for?

Nuseed Pty Ltd is requesting a licence to grow GM canola and Indian mustard modified for altered oil content and herbicide tolerance. The field trial would be conducted at up to 20 sites in NSW, Victoria and Queensland with a maximum planting area of 150 hectares each year. The trial would run from November 2022 to December 2027.

How have the GM canola and Indian mustard been modified?

The GM canola and Indian mustard contain up to seven introduced genes for altered oil content. The genes come from yeast and marine microalgae. The genes enable the GM plants to produce omega-3 long-chain fatty acids in their seed oil. Omega-3 long-chain fatty acids are considered to have health benefits for humans.

The GM canola and Indian mustard also contain an introduced gene from soil bacteria for tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate. This trait was used for GM plant selection during development of the GM lines in the laboratory.

What is the purpose of the trial?

The trial is to assess the performance of the GM canola and Indian mustard under field conditions. The GM plants grown in this field trial would not be used in commercial human food or animal feed.

What controls are proposed for this release?

The consultation Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) prepared for this application concluded that the field trial poses negligible risks to people or the environment. However, as this is a field trial under limited and controlled conditions, a number of licence conditions have been drafted to restrict when and where the trial can take place, limit the size of the trial, and stop GM canola and Indian mustard from spreading outside the trial sites. For example, there are conditions to isolate trial sites from sexually compatible crops, to securely transport and store the GMOs, and to inspect the sites at the end of the trial to check that all GM plants are destroyed. Full details of the draft licence conditions are available in the consultation RARMP.

How can I comment on this application?

The full consultation RARMP and a summary of the RARMP for application DIR 188 are available on the OGTR website or via the contacts listed below. You are invited to submit your written comments (including email) on the consultation version of the RARMP, related to any risks to the health and safety of people or to the environment from the proposed trial. Comments must be received by the close of the consultation period on **26 April 2022**.

What are the next steps in the evaluation process?

The RARMP will be finalised, taking into account submissions related to the protection of people or the environment. A de-identified summary of all comments received and consideration of those comments will be included in the Appendices to the final RARMP. The finalised RARMP will inform the Regulator's decision on whether or not to issue a licence.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

OGTR Website

Tel: 1800 181 030 E-mail: ogtr@health.gov.au