Questions & Answers on licence application DIR 191 – commercial import and distribution of genetically modified (GM) chrysanthemum

What is this application for?

International Flower Developments is seeking approval for commercial import and distribution of five types of GM chrysanthemum. If a licence is issued, cut flowers of GM chrysanthemum would be imported into Australia and sold to the public through florists and supermarkets, in the same way as non-GM flowers are imported and sold.

How has the GM chrysanthemum been modified?

The GM chrysanthemums are genetically modified to have blue or violet flower colour. The two introduced genes that alter flower colour come from the plants Canterbury bells and butterfly pea. The GM chrysanthemums also contain an introduced antibiotic resistance marker gene that was used to select modified plants during initial development of the GM chrysanthemums in the laboratory.

What is the purpose of the release?

The purpose of the proposed release is to allow commercial sale of GM chrysanthemum cut flowers Australia-wide for ornamental use. The GM chrysanthemums would not be grown in Australia, and would not be used in commercial human food or animal feed.

What controls are proposed for this release?

The licence application proposes ongoing commercial import and distribution of GM chrysanthemums. The Gene Technology Regulator has prepared a consultation Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP), which finds that the proposed commercial import of these GM chrysanthemum cut flowers poses negligible risk to the health and safety of people or the environment. However, licence conditions drafted in the consultation RARMP prohibit growing the GM chrysanthemums in Australia and ensure that there is ongoing oversight of the release.

Standard Australian biosecurity import conditions require imported chrysanthemum cut flowers to be devitalised by glyphosate treatment. This requirement will also apply to the GM chrysanthemum cut flowers.

How can I comment on this application?

The full consultation RARMP and a summary of the RARMP for application DIR 191 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 release. Comments must be received by the close of the consultation period on **20 December 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