Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION

Receipt of licence application from Queensland University of Technology for commercial release of genetically modified banana plants

Application for cultivation of the GM banana plants

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) has received a licence application (DIR 199) from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) for commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) banana plants. The GM banana plants have been modified for resistance to Fusarium wilt tropical race 4, also known as Panama disease. The applicant does not intend the GM banana plants to replace the current Cavendish banana cultivars growing in Australia but rather to provide a safety net to the Australian banana industry should it be heavily impacted by Panama disease.

The GM banana also contains an antibiotic marker gene that was used for the selection of plants during research.

A summary of the application and a Questions and Answers document is posted on our website under News or search for DIR-199.

Separate food approval process

QUT has also applied to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) for the fruit and other products of this GM banana to be permitted for sale as food. FSANZ will follow their legislated decision-making process. This includes any public consultations on their safety assessment. Information relating to this GM food application, A1274, and food labelling, is available on the FSANZ website.

Steps in the decision-making process for cultivation of the GM banana plants

Step 1. Currently, the Regulator is seeking advice on this application from a broad range of experts, agencies and authorities, and relevant local councils. No public consultation occurs at this early stage.

Step 2. The OGTR will prepare a consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for the application, considering the advice received in Step 1.

Step 3. Public consultation on the RARMP will occur and is anticipated to **start in August 2023**. Experts, agencies and authorities will also be asked for further advice**.** There will be at least 30 days for submission of comments. The invitation to comment, as well as the RARMP and other documents will be made available on our website. If you have subscribed to receive our updates, we will automatically send you an invitation to comment when the public consultation commences.

Step 4. The RARMP will be finalised, taking into consideration the comments received in Step 3.

Step 5. The Regulator must decide whether or not to issue a licence. The Regulator must make this decision by the legislative due date. The licence decision will be publicly notified, and the GMO Record updated, including our website.

If you have any questions or would like to receive a copy of the full application or the summary, please contact the OGTR and quote the reference number DIR 199.

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