

Questions & Answers on a determination to place dealings with genetically modified (GM) canola on the GMO Register - Register-003

What is the GMO Register?

The GMO Register is a list of approved activities (dealings) with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Licenced activities with 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.

You can find more information about the GMO Register on the [OGTR website](#).

What dealings with GMOs are to be included?

All dealings with the GM canola are permitted to be included on the GMO Register. They include the same sorts of activities undertaken with non-GM canola, such as conducting experiments, breeding, growing, importing and transporting. These dealings have been authorised under the licence for [DIR 020/2002](#) since 2003.

How has the GM canola been modified?

The MON-ØØØ73-7 canola, also known as Roundup Ready® canola, GT73 (RT73) canola and oilseed rape GT73, contains two introduced genes derived from common soil bacteria. The genes confer tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate, and therefore farmers can use this herbicide to kill weeds without damaging their GM canola crop.

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

MON-ØØØ73-7 canola has a history of safe use in Australia since the dealings were licensed for commercial release under DIR 020/2002 in 2003 and cultivation began in 2008. No adverse effects have been reported by the licence holder through their reporting requirements for DIR 020/2002, or by other people in Australia. The GM canola has also been authorised for cultivation, or for import, processing and use as human food and animal feed, in many other countries for over two decades. No adverse effects from the canola have been reported in those countries.

Have the risks associated with the dealings with GM canola been assessed?

The risks were initially assessed for the application for licence DIR 020/2002. As part of the consideration to place the dealings with GM canola 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. 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 canola.

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

The Regulator has made a decision – a determination – under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* (the Act) to include the dealings with GM canola on the GMO Register. The determination comes into effect on 20 August 2024. Once the determination commences, it will not be necessary for people conducting the dealings with the GM canola to hold or be covered by a licence under the Act.

What will change now that the dealings are included on the GMO Register?

Including dealings with the GM canola on the GMO Register should not change how the GM canola is grown or managed in the agricultural setting or how the market operates in respect to this GM canola.

Issues such as stewardship for commercial GM crops are outside the remit of the Regulator, but there is an expectation – as with any GM crop authorised for commercial cultivation – that industry best practices, including those related to stewardship for GM crops, are adhered to for any dealings with a GMO listed on the GMO Register.

Commercial agreements between seed suppliers and growers for a GM plant that is on the GMO Register can be put in place in a similar way to those in place for GM plants currently authorised under a commercial licence issued by the Regulator.

Trade and market issues are outside the scope of the Act. These issues, including segregation of crops and moratoria on GMOs for trade and marketing purposes are the remit of industry bodies and the States and Territories.

The determination to include the dealings with the GM canola on the Register has the OGTR identifier Register-003. This identifier can be quoted as evidence that dealings with the GM canola are currently authorised in Australia. For example, the GMO Register identifier can be used for documentation required by other countries relating to exporting the GMO from Australia. Likewise, this identifier can be used for documentation for import into Australia.

Does anyone else regulate the GM canola on the GMO Register?

Other regulatory requirements still apply to the GM canola. For example, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) regulates the application of glyphosate on the GM canola, IP Australia manages requirements for any Plant Breeders Rights and patents, the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) regulates biosecurity requirements related to import of the GM canola, and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) have approved the sale of food derived from the GM canola. Anyone conducting dealings with the GM canola must understand and comply with any requirements by other agencies or authorities.

Where can I find more information?

The final RARMP for Register-003 and a copy of the determination can be found on the [OGTR website](#) under News.

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