

Questions & Answers on licence DIR 209 – field trial of genetically modified (GM) sorghum

What does this licence allow?

The University of Queensland has been issued a licence to grow GM sorghum modified for altered reproduction. The field trial will be conducted at a trial site near Gatton in Queensland, with a maximum planting area of 1 hectare each year. The trial will run from March 2025 to March 2028.

How has the GM sorghum been modified?

The GM sorghum contains an introduced gene that is involved in asexual reproduction. There is also an introduced gene editing system that targets 4 sorghum genes involved in sexual reproduction and prevents them from functioning. This causes the GM sorghum to produce seeds asexually. The GM sorghum seeds will grow into plants that are clones of the parent plant.

In addition, the GM sorghum contains 2 introduced marker genes. These genes were used to select plants during development of the GM sorghum and do not have any function when plants are grown in the field.

What is the purpose of the trial?

The aim of the field trial is to assess the performance of the GM sorghum under field conditions. The GM sorghum grown in the field trial will not be used in human food or animal feed.

What controls are imposed for this release?

The Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for this application concludes that the field trial poses low risks to people or the environment, and that these risks can be managed by setting conditions on how the trial can be conducted. A number of licence conditions have been imposed to restrict when and where the trial can take place, limit the size of the trial, and stop GM sorghum or its pollen from spreading outside the trial site. For example, there are conditions to isolate the trial site from other sorghum crops or sexually compatible species, to securely transport and store the GMOs, and to inspect the site at the end of the trial to check that all GM plants are destroyed. Full details of these control measures are in the licence.

Want more information?

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the [DIR 209](#) page of the OGTR website or via Freecall 1800 181 030. These documents include the finalised Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP), a summary of the RARMP and the licence.

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