

Questions & Answers on licence DIR 216 – commercial release of genetically modified (GM) cotton

What does this licence allow?

Bayer CropScience Pty Ltd has received approval under the *Gene Technology Act 2000* for commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) cotton. The GM cotton and products derived from the GM cotton may enter general commerce, including use in human food and animal feed.

Where will this GM cotton be grown?

Farmers may grow the GM cotton anywhere in Australia, subject to restrictions in some Australian States and Territories for marketing reasons. Commercial cotton production occurs mainly in New South Wales and Queensland, and has recently expanded into northern Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

How has the GM cotton been modified?

The GM cotton contains 4 introduced genes from a common soil bacteria that confer insect resistance to common pests of cotton. Three of these genes provide protection against bollworms and one provides protection against certain bugs, aphids and thrips.

The GM cotton also contains 3 introduced genes for tolerance to herbicides glyphosate, glufosinate, and dicamba. The genes enable the GM cotton plants to grow in the presence of these herbicides, which can be used to control weeds in the GM cotton crop.

In addition, the GM cotton contains selectable marker genes derived from a common gut bacterium. These genes confer selective antibiotic resistance or enable expression of a reporter gene. They were used to select plants during laboratory development of the GM cotton and do not have any function when plants are grown in the field.

Has this GM cotton received any other approvals in Australia?

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is responsible for food safety. FSANZ has approved the use of food derived from each parent of this GM cotton, including food made from any offspring produced through conventional breeding. This covers approval for this GM cotton, so no further food approvals are required.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has regulatory responsibility for agricultural chemicals, including insecticidal substances and herbicide use. This GM cotton would require APVMA registration before it can be grown commercially in Australia.

What controls have been imposed for this GM cotton?

The licence is for an ongoing commercial release. The Regulator has not imposed any specific measures to manage risk, as the risk assessment concluded that this release of the GM cotton poses negligible risks to the health and safety of people or the environment. However, general conditions have been imposed to ensure that there is ongoing oversight of the release.

Want more information?

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the [DIR 216](#) 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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