

Questions & Answers on licence DIR 139 – Commercial release of genetically modified canola

What does this licence allow?

The Gene Technology Regulator has issued a licence to Pioneer Hi-Bred Australia Pty Ltd that permits commercial cultivation of canola known as Optimum™ GLY Canola. This canola is genetically modified (GM) for herbicide tolerance. The GM canola and its products can enter general commerce, including use in human food or animal feed.

What other regulatory approvals are required?

Food Standards Australia New Zealand has approved the use of material derived from the GM canola as food. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority is responsible for assessing an application to use herbicides on the GM canola.

Where will this canola be grown?

Farmers may grow the GM canola anywhere in Australia, subject to restrictions in some Australian States and Territories for marketing reasons. Currently, the states of Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland permit commercial cultivation of GM canola licensed by the Regulator, but the other canola growing states of South Australia and Tasmania prohibit GM canola crops. Further information can be obtained from the relevant State or Territory.

How has the GM canola been modified?

The GM canola contains a novel gene originally derived from a common soil bacterium. This novel gene is expected to enable the GM canola to continue growing in the presence of glyphosate. Herbicides containing glyphosate could then be used for weed control in the GM canola crop. A variety of GM canola with different genes for glyphosate tolerance has been commercially grown in Australia since 2008.

What controls have been imposed for this GMO?

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 GM canola poses negligible risks to the health and safety of people or to the environment. However, the Regulator has imposed general licence conditions to ensure that there is ongoing oversight of the release.

Want more information?

Several documents relating to this decision are available on the [DIR 139 page](#) of the OGTR website. These documents include the finalised Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP), a summary of the RARMP and the licence.