Australian Government
Department of Health
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

20 February 2017

Issue of licence DIR 150 to the Queensland University of Technology for the limited and controlled release of GM potato

On 6 December 2016, the Gene Technology Regulator invited submissions on the consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for licence application DIR 150 from the Queensland University of Technology.

The Regulator has now issued a licence in response to application DIR 150, authorising the limited and controlled release (field trial) of potato genetically modified (GM) for disease resistance.

The field trial is authorised to take place at one site of up to 0.1 hectares in Redland City, Queensland, for a period of two years. The purpose of the field trial is to assess the agronomic characteristics and Potato virus X disease response of the GM potato plants under field conditions. The GM potatoes will not be used in human food or animal feed.

The Regulator's decision to issue the licence was made after consultation on the RARMP with the public, State and Territory governments, Australian Government agencies, the Minister for the Environment, the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee and local councils, as required by the *Gene Technology Act 2000* and the corresponding State and Territory legislation.

The Regulator considered all submissions provided during the consultation process that related to the health and safety of people or the protection of the environment. The comments were considered in the context of current scientific information and used in finalising the RARMP. The finalised RARMP informed the Regulator's decision to issue the licence.

The finalised RARMP concludes that this limited and controlled release poses negligible risks to people and the environment and does not require specific risk treatment measures. However, licence conditions have been imposed to restrict spread and persistence of the GMOs and their genetic material in the environment and to limit the release in size, location and duration, as these were important considerations in the evaluation process.

Appendix A of the RARMP summarises the advice received from prescribed experts, agencies and authorities, and indicates how issues raised relating to risks to human health and safety or the environment were considered in preparing and finalising the document. No submissions on the RARMP were received from members of the public.

The finalised RARMP, together with a summary of the RARMP, a set of Questions and Answers on this decision and a copy of the licence, can be obtained on-line from the DIR 150 page of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's website or requested via the contacts detailed below.

Office of the Gene Technology Regulator
MDP 54 GPO Box 9848 CANBERRA ACT 2601 Tel: 1800 181 030 E-mail: ogtr@health.gov.au
OGTR website (www.ogtr.gov.au)