

Questions & Answers on licence DIR 153 – field trial of genetically modified (GM) sorghum

What does this licence allow?

The University of Queensland has received approval from the Gene Technology Regulator to grow GM sorghum plants in a field trial. The field trial is permitted to take place between October 2017 and June 2020 in south-east Queensland. In the first year one site may be planted with an area of up to 1 hectare. In each of the second and third years up to 4 sites may be planted with a combined area of up to 5 hectares.

How have the GM sorghum plants been modified?

The GM sorghum plants each contain up to two introduced genes or gene fragments derived from sorghum. The genetic modifications lead to increased seed protein content, increased seed protein digestibility, increased seed size and/or a larger number of seeds.

All GM sorghum plants will also contain an introduced antibiotic resistance gene derived from a common gut bacterium. This was used as a selectable marker during development of the GM plants in the laboratory.

What is the purpose of the trial?

The purpose of the field trial is to assess the agronomic characteristics, yield and grain quality of the GM sorghum plants under field conditions. A poultry feeding trial may also be conducted to assess nutritional value of the GM sorghum. The GM sorghum would not be used for human food or animal feed other than in the proposed poultry feeding trial.

What controls are imposed on this release?

A range of licence conditions have been imposed to limit the size, locations and duration of the release, and to require training for all people who work with the GM sorghum. Control measures include conditions to minimise dispersal of the GMOs or GM pollen from trial sites, to securely transport and store the GM seed, and to inspect trial sites after completion of the trial to ensure all GM plants are destroyed. A full list of the control measures is detailed in the licence.

Want more information?

A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the [DIR 153 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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