

Keightley, Ryan

From: Hodge, Leanne
Sent: Friday, 15 July 2011 2:17 PM
To: Janiec Stefanie
Cc: Ryan, Michael
Subject: GM wheat - talking points for queries [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Stefanie,

Mike suggested we get Claire some talking points in case she receives queries on CSIRO's GM wheat trial crops. Are you happy to forward these to Claire, or would you like me to?

Regarding the recent vandalism of trial GM wheat crops at CSIRO's Ginninderra facility this week, as noted previously GM regulation is a matter for the Health portfolio but for your information a few talking points are below if you get any queries. The key point is that **the incident is under investigation - led by the Australian Federal Police - with input from OGTR.**

Talking points

- This field trial was approved by the Gene Technology Regulator in 2009 after conducting a rigorous science-based risk assessment and extensive consultation.
- These trials are not secret - information about them, including trial locations, has been available on the Regulator's website since 2009.
- There has been no breach of containment for any GM wheat trials and wheat from these trials cannot enter the human or animal food supplies.
- I am advised that this incident is being investigated by the police and the Gene Technology Regulator.

Background

The object of the Gene Technology Act 2000 is to protect the health and safety of people and to protect the environment by identifying risks posed by or results from gene technology. The risk analysis methodology within the Australian regulatory scheme is based on key international standards and is widely respected nationally and internationally as representing best practice.

There has been no commercial release of GM wheat in Australia, and no licence applications for the commercial release of GM wheat have been received by the Regulator.

Since 2005, the Regulator has approved eleven small GM wheat field trials, and only after conducting a rigorous science-based risk assessment and extensive public and expert consultation for each. These field trials relate to early stage research on GM wheat with traits such as salt tolerance, drought tolerance, altered starch content or improved nutrient use efficiency, and are being conducted by the CSIRO, the University of Adelaide and the Victorian Department of Primary Industries.

Each trial is limited in size and duration, ranging in size from 0.1 to 2 hectares per year for up to 5 years. Details of field trial locations are publically available on the OGTR website.

Kind regards,

Leanne

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