QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON LICENCE DECISION DIR 104 FOR LIMITED & CONTROLLED RELEASE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA AND INDIAN MUSTARD

What is this licence for?
Bayer CropScience Pty Ltd (Bayer) has received approval to trial, under limited and controlled conditions, genetically modified (GM) canola and Indian mustard. The field trial will take place at up to 21 trial sites per year which may be located in 19 nominated local government areas in South Australia and Victoria. Each site will be a maximum of 6 ha with a total area planted of up to 126 ha annually over three years from January 2011 to January 2014.

What is the purpose of the trial?
The purpose of the trial is: to evaluate the agronomic performance of GM canola and Indian mustard lines under field conditions to allow selection of promising lines for future development; to increase seed stocks for future experiments; and to collect data to support potential future applications for commercial release. Material from the GM canola and Indian mustard will not be used in human food or animal feed.

How have the GM canola and Indian mustard lines been modified?
The GM canola and Indian mustard lines contain genes that confer tolerance to herbicides. Some of the GM canola and Indian mustard lines also contain genes derived from a common soil bacterium that are expected to prevent the production of pollen by flowers, or to restore flower fertility, in order to facilitate production of hybrid plants through conventional breeding.

What controls have been imposed for this release?
The Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for this application concluded that the release poses negligible risks to people and the environment. However, a range of licence conditions have been imposed to limit the release to the size, locations and duration requested by the applicant as these were important considerations in the assessment process. As well as limits on the scale of the release, control measures have been imposed to restrict the spread and persistence of the GMOs and their introduced genetic material. These include: ensuring that the GM canola and Indian mustard plants are isolated from non-GM canola and Indian mustard and other related plants; cleaning of equipment used in connection with the GM plants; transport and storage of the GM plant materials in accordance with the Regulator’s guidelines; and monitoring the release sites for at least two years after harvest, during which time any volunteer plants found must be destroyed.

Want more information?
A number of documents relating to this decision are available on the OGTR website (<http://www.ogtr.gov.au> under “What’s New”) or via Freecall 1800 181 030. These documents include the finalised RARMP, an Executive Summary, a Technical Summary and a copy of the full licence.