



HeadsUp A COMMENTARY ON INDUSTRY ISSUES



Confidential

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Department of Health Releases Decision RIS

The Department of Health recently presented a proposal to the Gene Technology Ministers' Meeting (GTMM), regarding modernising and futureproofing the National Gene Technology Scheme.

The GTMM endorsed industry's preferred option, Option B, acknowledging that enhancements are still required to future-proof the scheme, as advocated by CropLife Australia. This follows a lengthy stakeholder engagement period considering the Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) which closed in March 2021.

The Department of Health has now released the associated Decision RIS which has addressed many of CropLife's suggested improvements provided during the consultation period, however there are still a range of significant shortcomings with the Statement.

CropLife's feedback associated with GM Definitions, Notifiable Dealings and Authorisation Pathways (including risk assessment) have all been acknowledged by the Department. The Decision RIS has also captured CropLife's statements regarding enhancements to Option B including those associated with:

- Recognition of safe use and previous risk assessments, including streamlined assessment for dealings that have a safe use/management;
- Streamlining of applications between regulators; and
- Provision of a specific regulatory pathway for clinical trials involving GMOs.

However, the Decision RIS:

- Does not present a pathway for the rapid exit from the regulatory scheme for innovations that present a risk profile comparable to that of conventional breeding;
- Does not specifically and immediately exclude (nor provide a pathway for exclusion of) products developed using SDN-2 and ODM from regulation as GMOs;
- Does not address concerns raised with the non-notifiable pathway in Option B that would ensure that products in this pathway would not be captured by the regulatory scheme and considered a GMO for trade and marketing purposes; and
- Is strongly leaning in favour of the inclusion of the word 'creation' in the definition of 'gene technology' and 'genetically modified organism' which is strongly opposed by CropLife and our strategic industry partner organisations.

That stated, the Department has acknowledged all of these issues, along with CropLife's advocated position, specifically in the Decision RIS and has indicated that further work to address them will be conducted during the next phase of this process. The endorsed Decision RIS will inform the preparation of legislation, expected later

this year (but more realistically next year considering the Federal Department of Health's performance on this issue to date). The Department of Health has also committed to further consultation with stakeholders once it is released.

With a long road ahead to ensure the National Gene Technology Scheme is truly modernised in line with our members' requirements, CropLife will continue to work with and advocate to Federal and State and Territory Ministers on the development of an Enhanced Option B and timely implementation of recommendations.

We thank all our members for their contributions and persistence during this lengthy process.

For more information, contact: Lucy Darragh | 02 6273 2733 | lucy.darragh@croplife.org.au

International Coffee Day

Today is International Coffee Day, an occasion to promote and celebrate one of the world's most loved beverages which the plant science industry plays a large role in protecting and enabling.

CropLife Australia has put out a media release to note the occasion and is undertaking a range of social media activities in support of the messaging including actively promoted material. These can be found on our Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages.

Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia, Mr Matthew Cossey said, "The world consumes around 500 billion cups of coffee each year. While it is not a major crop in Australia, as a commodity, coffee is worth over \$100 billion globally and is grown in over 80 countries. However, the current large-scale production of coffee beans would not be possible without farmer's ready access to crop protection products. Without pesticides, coffee crops would suffer yield losses of up to 40 per cent due to devastating diseases such as coffee leaf rust and pests like root nematodes and the coffee borer beetle."

Read our full media release [online](#).

Engage with and share our social media posts: [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

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