Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Agricultural Innovation
3 March 2016

Question no: 1

Topic: Agricultural Innovation

Type of Question: Hansard, page 3

Member: Ms Marino

Question:

Ms MARINO: So, if we look at your body of work so far, how many GMO approvals have you given in your time?
Dr Cook: In my time at the regulator—I do not believe I have given any at this stage. I have only been in the job for three months. But we can probably find that information for you, if that would be—
CHAIR: Yes, it would
Ms MARINO: Compared to the numbers of applications that have been made and the number of approvals that have been given.
Dr Cook: Yes, we can provide that information for you.
CHAIR: Just to take that a bit further, perhaps back beyond your three months as well. The question was about your time. I think perhaps a little bit of—
Dr Cook: The regulator's time in the generic function, yes.
CHAIR: Yes.
Dr Cook: We can certainly provide the information about the number of DIRs and DNIRs that have had approval since the inception of the scheme, if you would like.
Ms MARINO: That would be useful for the committee, thank you.

Answer:

Information on all authorised Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) dealings approved by, or notified to, the Gene Technology Regulator or specified in an Emergency Dealing Determination or entered in the GMO Register are contained in the GMO Record which is available on the website of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator.

From 2001 until present, there have been 145 applications for licences for Dealings involving Intentional Release (DIR) into the environment (i.e. commercial licences or field trials). Of these 145 applications, 118 DIR licences have been issued, 20 were withdrawn prior to assessment and seven are currently under evaluation. There are 46 current licences, 71 have been surrendered by the licence holder and one licence that has expired. One surrendered

licence was replaced by an authorisation on the GMO Register (GM carnations). For details of all DIR assessments and licence status refer to http://www.ogtr.gov.au/internet/ogtr/publishing.nsf/Content/ir-1.

During the same period there were 564 applications for licences for Dealings Not involving the Intentional Release (DNIR) into the environment (i.e. the work undertaken in physical containment facilities such as laboratories). Of these 564 applications, 431 DNIR licences have been issued, 110 applications were withdrawn prior to assessment, two applications were not issued licences and 18 applications were integrated into other DNIR licence applications. There are 122 current licences, 176 that have been surrendered by the licence holder and 133 licences that have expired – refer http://www.ogtr.gov.au/internet/ogtr/publishing.nsf/Content/contained-1

As at 8 March 2016, there have been 7814 Notifiable Low Risk Dealings (NLRDs) reported/notified to the Gene Technology Regulator (noting that NLRDs are reported by organisations annually) – refer http://www.ogtr.gov.au/internet/ogtr/publishing.nsf/Content/nlrdrec-1.

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Agricultural Innovation
3 March 2016

Question no: 2

Topic: Agricultural Innovation

Type of Question: Hansard, page 4

Member: Ms McGowen

Question:

Ms McGOWAN: One thing I would like to explore a little bit is the public perception of GMOs and your role, and public awareness of the technology. From your perspective, what is the relationship between regulatory approval of the environmental release of GMs and public sentiment about GMs? What impact has the decline in general public knowledge about it had on the use of GM technology in Australia?

Answer:

A copy of the 2015 Community Attitudes to Gene Technology Report is attached (Attachment A) and can be also be accessed via the website of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator at http://www.ogtr.gov.au/internet/ogtr/publishing.nsf/Content/reports-other. This page also includes a link to reports of previous surveys on the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science website.

Attachment A: 2015 Community Attitudes to Gene Technology Report