

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017**

**Ref No: SQ17-000804**

**OUTCOME:** 5 - Regulation, Safety and Protection

**Topic:** Review by the Austrian Environmental Agency

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Rice, Janet

**Question:**

A review by the Austrian Environmental Agency concluded that “Approaches to targeted mutagenesis by SSNs [site-specific nucleases] are subject to a number of possible unintended effects. According to the current lack of knowledge on the details of the involved mechanisms, significant uncertainties are associated with an assessment of unintended effects.” The review therefore argues that “the respective risk issues thus need to be addressed by a comprehensive molecular characterisation, taking into account the experiences from risk assessment of GMOs.”\*

- a) Does the OGTR disagree with this analysis?
- b) If yes, on what basis?
- c) If no, then will the OGTR ensure that GMOs produced using these techniques are regulated and subject to comprehensive molecular characterisation?

\* Ibid.

**Answer:**

The Gene Technology Regulator has not formed a concluded view on the regulatory status of targeted mutagenesis by site-specific nuclease (SSN) technology.

Any response to this question would be pre-emptive of the outcome of the current technical review of the Gene Technology Regulations 2001.