

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

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

**Ref No: SQ17-000809**

**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 “neither the efficiency nor the specificity of the ODM [Oligo-directed mutagenesis] technology can be sufficiently controlled”, that ODM may lead to off-target mutations,\* and that such adverse effects “may also not be easy to anticipate, as single mutations can have relevant effects, e.g. lead to an increase in expressed plant toxins.” \*\*

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 ODM are regulated and subject to comprehensive molecular characterisation?

\* Ibid., p. 18-19.

\*\* Ibid. p. 19.

**Answer:**

The Gene Technology Regulator has not formed a concluded view on the regulatory status of oligo-directed mutagenesis (ODM) technology.

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