

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000830

OUTCOME: 5 - Regulation, Safety and Protection

Topic: Agroinfiltration

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Rice, Janet

Question:

A review by the Austrian Environmental Agency concluded that in the case of agroinfiltration:

- ii. The absence of modifications needs to be demonstrated in cells used for future breeding;
 - iii. Changes in the expression of the target genes as well as other likely-affected non-target genes need to be evaluated;
 - iv. The unintended release of transgenic bacterial strains into the environment can result in adverse effects as they may survive in soil and transfer transgenes to other plants or other microorganisms. The release of transgenic plant viruses from agroinfected material is a concern for the same reasons;
 - v. Any plant materials originating from agroinfiltration and agroinfection applications needs to be tested rigorously for the presence of transgenic bacterial and viral DNA.
- a) Does the OGTR disagree with this analysis?
b) If yes, on what basis?
c) If no, does the OGTR think it is appropriate that organisms produced using these technique not be regulated as GMOs given these potential unintended effects?

Answer:

The Gene Technology Regulator has not expressed a view in relation to the conclusions of the report by the Austrian Environmental Agency and the material on which these conclusions are based.

It is the Gene Technology Regulator's view that subject to paragraphs (d) and (e) of the definition of 'genetically modified organism' in section 10 of the *Gene Technology Act 2000*, organisms that are genetically modified in a transient manner (e.g. using agroinfiltration) are GMOs while the genetic modification or trait is present, and dealings with these GMOs are subject to regulation under the *Gene Technology Act 2000*.