

# MemberUpdate

Update No. 39 Of 19 - 28 November 2019

**TOPIC: Japan - procedures for products derived from genome edited technology.**

*Distribution: GTA Members - primary contact list. Please circulate to all appropriate internal parties*

## 1. Background

- The Japanese Government has developed policies regarding the handling of food products derived from genome-edited technology and is currently developing policies regarding feed genome-edited deeds and deed additives.
- The Office of Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) has undertaken a review of implications of plant breeding innovation in relation to its activities and the Australian Parliament has approved changes to regulations in regard to new plant breeding techniques.
- As a result, there is increased awareness in Japan regarding gene edited technologies and their application to grain crops. This has led to some GTA members reporting that Japanese customers have raised queries regarding these issues in relation to Australian crops.

## 2. Japan mandatory notification requirements for food and feed products derived from genome edited technology

- The following is provided for Members information (some website links may require English translation eg via Google translate):
- Japan Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) has updated [handling procedures and the notification for foods derived from genome editing technology](#) and [flowchart of process](#).
- Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has recently undertaken consultation in regard to Feed Safety Guidelines on the Handling of Genome-edited Feeds and Feed Additives. The public comment period closed on October 10, 2019, with feedback now being considered by Japan's MAFF.
- Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) also released guidance for voluntary labelling. Other regulatory authorities in the Government of Japan continue to develop genome edited product handling guidelines. [Click here](#) to view Report - Japan: Labelling Guidance for Genome Edited Food Products.

### 3. Australian gene-editing regulation

- In April 2019 the Australian government announced that gene-editing will not require deregulation as GMO. This applies to methods which must allow host cell to repair the break naturally i.e. unguided repair /Site-Directed Nuclease, (SDN-1).
- ***These changes will allow research trials and crops to be grown without any restrictions.***
- Australia's position on food safety and labelling is still to be decided. This is controlled by separate legislation (Foods Standards Code). Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) are currently reviewing how it will deal with foods developed using gene editing and is expected to report late 2019. Any changes will require a public consultation process.
- It is understood that a number of international companies, Australian universities and public research institutions are developing gene-edited traits. GTA's understanding is that current deployment of gene-editing in Australian based breeding programs is not public i.e. is currently limited to glasshouse and laboratory research.
- Currently, there are no OGTR approved Australian field trials involving gene edited crops. Thus, no program has started wide-scale yield and quality testing.
- Furthermore commercial release of a wheat variety would also require classification by Wheat Quality Australia which takes minimum of three years, and similarly malting barley through Barley Australia

### 4. Implications for Australian export

- The industry, through GTA, is currently developing information sharing guidelines in relation to these technologies. GTA will consult with the breeding/seed/technology sector in relation to these guidelines to ensure that the trade has knowledge of gene-edited varieties coming to market and can meet customer and regulatory requirements in importing countries.
- GTA will endeavour to align this work and information gathering process internationally through the work of the International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC) to optimise global trade facilitation and minimise trade disruption risks resulting from differences in countries gene technology regulatory approaches.
- At this point in time, in response to market queries, Members may wish to consider that:
  - Australia currently does not have any gene-edited crops commercially available.
  - This may change as a result of the proposed OGTR regulatory amendments (noted above) and potential subsequent commercial release of gene edited seed (which would unlikely to occur for several seasons).
  - Australia has three commercial GM crops in its grains supply chain (GM canola, GM cottonseed, GM safflower). These are managed and segregated in the supply chain under the [“Market Choices Framework for GM Crops”](#). This has been developed by industry and issued by GTA to enable co-existence and provide producers and consumers with market choice.

### 5. Further Details

Should you require further assistance, please contact GTA on [admin@graintrade.org.au](mailto:admin@graintrade.org.au) or 02 9235 2155 .