Organic Industries

Voice of Australia's organic industries

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Gene Technology Fact Sheet

The *Gene Technology Act 2000*, currently, requires all uses of Genetic Manipulation techniques, and the animals, plants and microbes created, to be notified to the Office of Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) for assessment and licensing.

What is being deregulated?

The federal government intends to exempt (deregulate) the new gene editing methods known as SDN1 and their products from any notification or traceability. **These changes will become law on 8 October 2019.**

Gene editing is the transfer of genes (targeted and untargeted), from the same species, in artificially created conditions. This includes site directed nuclease (SDN) techniques: SDN-1, SDN-2 and SDN-3.

What does deregulation mean?

This means that the OGTR, the government and the public **will not be told** if SDN1 organisms **enter our environment, farms or food supplies.**

Concerns for the organic, non-GM sector and general consumer:

- Loss of ability to track social and health implications from implementation of these techniques into the food chain.
- Impact on selling into markets that have not deregulated gene editing—such as the EU and China.
- Need to better understand the impact from implementation of gene edited foods on importation and exportation within premium commodity markets.
- Lack of due process of engagement to fully garner support from agricultural industry and no proper cost-benefit analysis.
- No detailed risk assessment conducted on deregulating this gene editing technology.
- GM protein testing does not fully encompass off target protein changes from use of gene editing technology – need the ability to track and trace this technology.

What action is required?

A last opportunity for the **disallowance of the deregulation of SDN1 gene editing** is on the table for debate **in the Senate on 17 September.**

Once the horse has bolted, it is too late to close the gate.

Organic Industries of Australia recommends that our Australian Government takes a precautionary approach to this technology.