FOOD STANDARDS Australia New Zealand
Te Mana Kounga Kai – Ahitereiria me Aotearoa

N 13000738

MINUTE TO THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY - RELEASE OF REPORT

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY NEUMANN

RELEASE OF THE REPORT OF A FSANZ WORKSHOP ON NEW PLANT BREEDING TECHNIQUES

PURPOSE: To alert you to the intended release of the report of a Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) workshop on new plant breeding techniques (NPBTs), at Attachment 1, into the public domain via the FSANZ website.

TIMING

2. We are planning to release the report on the FSANZ website on 3 June 2013. [redacted]

[redacted]

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

3. We convened an expert panel to provide scientific advice on several NPBTs and to also consider the scientific question of whether foods from plants developed using these techniques should be regarded as genetically modified (GM) food or whether they are more like conventional foods. This is an important consideration because crops developed using NPBTs and derived food products are expected to be commercialised in the near future.

4. The expert panel considered six different techniques: cisgenesis/intragenesis, GM rootstock grafting, two different mutagenic techniques (oligo-directed mutagenesis and zinc-finger nuclease technology types 1, 2 and 3), reverse breeding, and a proprietary hybrid production technique known as seed production technology.

5. The scientific conclusions of the workshop were: that food derived using cisgenesis/intragenesis, zinc-finger nuclease technology type 3 and GM rootstock grafting should be regarded as GM food; and food derived using oligo-directed mutagenesis, zinc-finger nuclease technology types 1 and 2, and seed production technology is more like conventional food. The expert panel was unable to reach a conclusion about reverse breeding because of a lack of available technical information. They noted however that the technique did not appear to have widespread commercial application.

6. The expert panel also concluded that a simplified GM food safety assessment approach may be warranted for foods derived using cisgenesis/intragenesis and certain applications of GM rootstock grafting.

ANALYSIS OF KEY FINDINGS

7. We considered the key findings of the expert panel and concur with their scientific conclusions. As no conclusion could be reached in relation to reverse breeding, we did not include this in any subsequent analysis. It will be re-considered once more information becomes available.

8. We also determined that the scientific conclusions from the workshop for each of these techniques are consistent with our interpretation of the current definitions in Standard 1.5.2 – Food produced using Gene Technology under the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code) in terms of what would or would not be captured for pre-market approval. This means foods derived using cisgenesis/intragenesis, zinc-finger nuclease technology type 3 and GM rootstock grafting are captured for pre-market approval. Foods derived using oligo-directed mutagenesis, zinc-finger nuclease technology types 1 and 2, and seed production technology are not be captured.

We are now proceeding to operationalise the outcomes of the workshop using the FSANZ *Application Handbook*, which will be amended to clarify the regulatory status of food derived from the NPBTs considered by the expert panel.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

13. A statement at Attachment 2, containing a link to the report, will be released on the FSANZ website concurrently with the publication of the report.

BACKGROUND

14. All GM food is subject to pre-market approval under Standard 1.5.2 of the Code. Approval is contingent on completion of a food safety assessment.

15. During 2011, FSANZ received a number of enquiries from researchers and industry about the food regulatory status of various new plant breeding techniques. Following internal discussion, it was not immediately clear whether:

a. such techniques would be captured by the current definitions in Standard 1.5.2, or
b. if they were captured, whether that would be scientifically appropriate and consistent with the original intent of the Standard.

We were also aware that OGTR had been receiving similar queries from developers regarding whether plants produced using these new techniques would be regulated under the definitions of the GT Act. The regulation of new technologies was also considered in the 2011 Review of the GT Act and in the Regulator's submission to the review. Similar matters are being discussed in the European Union and being raised in international fora, such as OECD.

16. We therefore decided to convene an expert panel to provide scientific advice in relation to six new techniques at a closed technical workshop held in May 2012. The workshop was chaired by Professor Peter Langridge, Director and CEO, Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, University of Adelaide and included four other external experts (see Attachment 1 for other members of the expert panel). Representatives from the OGTR and the New Zealand Environmental Protection Authority also attended the workshop.

17. The objectives of the workshop were to improve our scientific knowledge and understanding of each of the techniques and provide scientific advice on the nature of derived food products. It was not the role of the panel to make a legal determination as to whether the techniques or their derived food products would be captured under Standard 1.5.2. However, we did ask the panel to provide their scientific opinion on whether derived food products should be regarded as GM food or more like conventional food.

RECOMMENDATION

R1. That you NOTE the imminent release of the *Report of a Workshop on New Plant Breeding Techniques* on FSANZ's website.

Steve McCutcheon
Chief Executive Officer
FSANZ
23 May 2013
Outcome: 1: Population Health

SHAYNE NEUMANN

R3. NOTED 8 JUL 2013

Contact Officer: [redacted]

MINISTER'S COMMENTS:

Advice Rating	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Comments**
Timeliness						
Presentation						
Quality of Advice						
	Poor		Satisfactory		Excellent	

ATTACHMENTS:

1. New plant breeding techniques: Report of a workshop hosted by Food Standards Australia New Zealand
2. Website statement: New plant breeding techniques in the spotlight

Was the Minute included on the Forecast of Minutes?	**YES** **Forecast Number**: F13000746
Forecast Date	**23 / 5 / 2013 – 6 / 6 / 2013**
Did it meet the forecast date?	**YES**