

Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia



Regulatory Oversight of New Breeding Techniques

ABCA recognises the importance of new techniques in plant and animal breeding and believes regulatory oversight should be science based, clear and consistent to encourage innovation in Australian agriculture.

The Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia (ABCA) recognises the importance of new techniques in plant and animal breeding. In most cases, new breeding techniques (NBTs) are innovative improvements and refinements of traditional plant and animal breeding methods.

Now breeders can induce very specific changes in plant and animal genes in a way that mimics the changes that occur in nature or through traditional breeding methods. Using NBTs can enable breeders to create the same, desired genetic variation with greater precision and efficiency than previous breeding methods.

Genomic changes produced by NBTs should be viewed in light of the inherent natural variability of plant and animal genomes, the comparable genomic changes that occur with the use of traditional breeding methods, and the long safe history of use of traditional breeding methods.

Regulatory oversight of products developed through NBTs, if needed, should be based on sound scientific principles and proportionate to risk.

Regulatory oversight that is not commensurate with risk is non value adding and results in delay and higher costs, which limit the access of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and public breeding institutions to the latest innovative breeding tools.

Plant and animal breeders need regulatory certainty so they can reliably plan their breeding programs, product development and market strategies.

Consistent regulatory oversight of products developed using NBTs would facilitate innovation and allow the uptake of advanced, innovative breeding applications by both private and public sector breeders.

Lack of clarity in regulatory oversight of products developed using NBTs hinders innovation and the economic benefits this could bring to Australian agriculture.

Further information

Information is available from

- www.foodstandards.gov.au

Disclaimer: The Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia gives no warranty and makes no representation that the information contained in this document is suitable for any purpose or is free from error. The Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia accepts no responsibility for any person acting or relying upon the information contained in this document, and disclaims all liability. Reviewed: April 2016.

