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**Nuseed Australia Pty Ltd is pleased to offer the following comments in relation to the review of the Gene Technology Act (GTA):**

Nuseed recognizes the efforts that have been made, through the GTA, to enact a set of regulations to manage the testing and commercial introduction of genetically modified (GM) crops. Nuseed also fully supports the current science-based regulatory system for GM crops and acknowledges the strengths of the current Australian regulatory and approval system.

While the GTA is intended to establish a nationally consistent scheme for regulating GM crops, State and Territorial governments have, to a certain extent, prevented this from becoming reality. A strong set of national regulations and guidelines has been undermined by the enactment of moratoria by various other legislative bodies. This has had an unsettling effect on both Australian R&D efforts and on commercialisation of GM crops in Australia. The creation of de facto GM-free regions within the country adds to the cost of operating a seed business in Australia, since certain seed products must be restricted to only those States or Territories that have allowed their use. Nuseed believes it is critical that in the near future the inconsistent regulatory landscape across Australia be addressed.

There is now 15 years of experience in growing GM crops in some countries (e.g., the USA and Canada), and over 10 in several others. This experience attests to the success of these crops in providing enhanced economic returns to farmers, decreasing overall pesticide use, and mitigating some environmental effects of agriculture through reduced tillage practices and fuel consumption. Nuseed recognizes the need for novel GM crops to be safe to both the environment and the consumer; we would support changes in policy and procedure that would accelerate the approval of novel GM traits that offer clear, production, environmental and consumer benefits.

The first cohort of GM plants brought to the market carried new traits such as herbicide tolerance and insect resistance, in most cases conferred by foreign (e.g., bacterial) genes. A new generation of GM plants is now being developed with slightly modified versions of endogenous genes, or similar genes from other plant species. Nuseed acknowledges the need for regulation of such products; we believe that the regulatory constraints need to reflect a potentially lower risk with these products especially if the novel genes or gene products are already present in the environment or in the human diet.

In closing, Nuseed fully supports the OGTR and its efforts to ensure safety of new products to the environment and the consumer. Nuseed also supports any moves that will lead to a nationally consistent regulatory system. A fair and flexible regulatory system is critical to the success of Australian R&D efforts, which are substantial, and to any Australian companies wishing to participate in this area commercially. We look forward to a positive outcome of the GTA review and will be pleased to provide further input as the process develops further.

Bill Swann

Country Manager

Nuseed Australia