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Expert Advisory Group on New Breeding Techniques

*Wednesday, 14 June 2017
8:30 am – 3.30 pm (AEST Canberra)*

Summary & Outcomes

Attendees

Members: §22 [Redacted]
[Redacted]

Observers: [Redacted]

FSANZ: Scott Crerar (Chair); Mark Booth, Barbara Butow, Mark Fitzroy, Janet Gorst, Jenny Hazelton, Lisa Kelly, Peter May, Sasha Tait

Meeting Summary

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These categories were the main focus of discussion by the group. Key points arising from the discussion were:

- The need for a risk-based approach when deciding what foods should be captured for pre-market assessment and approval. A risk-based approach would consider not only the characteristics of the food but also whether the technique is likely to be associated with any additional risks not readily discernible from consideration of the product alone i.e. both the product and the process should be considered.

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- **Category 2** techniques essentially comprise the genome editing tools (SDN techniques and oligo-directed mutagenesis), where these are used to modify/edit the existing genome e.g. deletion of DNA (both large and small) or alteration of DNA sequence. The process of introducing the edit may involve the insertion of DNA (a transgene coding for a SDN), which will subsequently be removed from the genome via segregation, leaving only the edit remaining in the final food producing line.
- No consensus view about Category 2 was reached other than to note that whether or not a food should be captured for pre-market assessment and approval would probably depend on the individual case. In discussing this, the following was noted:
 - genome editing can produce organisms with novel traits (e.g. herbicide tolerance, hornless dairy cattle) but this does not necessarily result in food with altered or novel characteristics. Also, the size of the genome change (e.g. large deletion versus a single point mutation) is not a predictor of whether there will be any impact on the food.
 - in terms of risk and developing criteria around what should or should not be captured, it would be worthwhile investigating whether a distinction could be made between those edits leading to novel characteristics **in the food** versus those that simply mimic existing variation (which can arise through spontaneous events or from the use of traditional mutagenic approaches) without introducing novel characteristics into the food.

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