

Comments from the Victorian Departments of Health & Human Services and Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources

Due date of submission – 29 February 2016

The Victorian Departments of Health & Human Services and Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources (the departments) welcome the opportunity to provide comments on Application A1116 – Food derived from Herbicide-tolerant and Insect-protected Corn Line MZIR098 (the Application).

The Application seeks permission for the sale and use of food derived from corn line MZIR098 that has been genetically modified (GM) to provide tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate ammonium (glufosinate) and protection against key beetle pests, particularly western corn rootworm.

From the FSANZ assessment report it is understood that:

- The purpose of the application is to offer growers increased flexibility in weed and pest control, and in conventional breeding.
- MZIR098 is a dent corn which is mostly processed into products such as corn syrup, corn starch and corn oil. These highly refined products are unlikely to contain any novel protein or DNA, and so would not require GM labelling. However, it is understood that any products that do contain the novel protein or DNA, such as corn meal and grits, would be subject to the GM labelling requirements under the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, enabling consumers to make informed choices.
- Commercial cultivation of MZIR098 is likely to occur predominantly in North America. There is currently no intention by the applicant to seek approval to grow this GM corn variety in Australia or New Zealand.
- FSANZ approval is required to ensure that foods derived from corn line MZIR098, and products containing these foods as ingredients, may legally be imported, sold and used in Australia and New Zealand.

The departments are of the view that permission for food derived from this corn line would increase the choice of raw material available to buyers. No toxicity, allergenicity, or nutrient composition concerns were raised by FSANZ in the safety assessment. Moreover, the modes of action, the physicochemical properties and the history of safe use indicate that corn line MZIR098 presents no risk to humans or livestock.

On this basis, the departments support the progression of the Application.