

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: CSIRO
Output Group: - CSIRO

DEST Question No. E951_04

Senator Carr provided in writing

Question:

Given that CSIRO sought and received approval from the Gene Technology Regulator to import WSMV, or at least a molecular construct that was derived from this virus, can CSIRO provide evidence to confirm whether this material was actually imported or not?

Answer:

Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus

The licence referred to above approves the use of seven viruses, including Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus (in the form of non-infectious DNA), as vectors for gene silencing in plants to further understanding of gene function.

However, of the seven viruses named in the licence, only the following five were obtained by CSIRO (in accordance with the terms of the licence) and used for research: Tobacco Mosaic Virus; Barley Yellow Dwarf Mosaic Virus; Potato Virus X; Johnson Grass Mosaic Virus; and Foxtail Mosaic Virus.

Although the Brome Mosaic Virus and Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus were also nominated in the licence, CSIRO did not obtain either virus, as the five viruses named above were sufficient for its research.

If CSIRO had obtained Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus (in the form of non-infectious DNA), as vectors for gene silencing in plants to further understanding of gene function, it was required to:

- 1) First seek a licence from the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) to conduct this research using Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus; and
- 2) Upon gaining a licence from the OGTR, CSIRO would then be required to apply to the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) for a Permit to Import Quarantine Material.

Although it received permission from the OGTR to obtain WSMV in the form of non-infectious DNA, CSIRO did not proceed with importation of WSMV as it was not required for its research.

Because it was not required for its research, CSIRO did not apply to the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) for a Permit to Import Quarantine Material, and AQIS has no record of receiving any application to import WSMV.