

GM Secretariat Support
Primary Industries and Regions SA – PIRSA
Government of South Australia
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23 September 2019

RE: Submission to the statutory consultation on the lifting of South Australia's moratorium on the cultivation of Genetically Modified (GM) food crops

Cotton Australia welcomes the recent announcement to lift the GM moratorium on mainland South Australia. Cotton Australia supports freedom of choice for farmers and their right to access GM crops approved by the Gene Technology Regulator.

Cotton Australia is the key representative body for Australia's cotton growing industry and welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of cotton growers on this issue. The cotton industry is an integral part of the Australian economy, worth more than \$2 billion per-annum in export earnings and helping to underpin more than 50 rural communities.

The cotton industry has been growing GM crops since 1996 with over 99% of the industry growing crops containing insecticidal and herbicide tolerant traits. The introduction of GM crops has had significant economic, environmental and social benefits for the cotton industry. The success of GM cotton crops in Australia is underpinned by a strong independent regulatory framework and an industry commitment toward effective stewardship of the technology.

Australian cotton farmers using GM cotton varieties have seen significant economic gains with an average increase in farm income between 1996 – 2015 valued at \$287 per hectare from insecticidal resistant traits and \$37 per hectare for herbicidal tolerant traits (Brooks, 2018).

These economic gains are attributable to large savings in insecticide products and associated application costs. Genetically Modified traits have enabled cotton growers to reduce insecticide use by 93% since 1997. During this period average farm yields have increased by 38%. Herbicide tolerant traits enabled a reduction in soil tillage, resulting in improved soil stored moisture, less erosion and reduced carbon emissions (Brooks 2018).

Cotton Australia would welcome an opportunity to provide further information on our position on the lifting of South Australia's moratorium on GM food crops or any further information on cotton production in general. For more information, contact Sally Ceeney, Research Direction and Stewardship Policy Officer on 0459 189 771 or sallyc@cotton.org.au.



Advancing Australian Cotton

Yours sincerely,

Sally Ceeney

Research Direction and Stewardship Policy Officer
Cotton Australia

Brookes G and Barfoot P (2018) *'GM crops: global socio-economic and environmental impacts 1996-2016'*. PG Economics, Dorchester, UK (June).

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