

section 3.4 |



appendix 3

Outcomes of Consultation: Submissions from the Public

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3.4 Use of genetic modification, genetically modified organisms and products

Background

Warrant item (a) calls for information about the current use of genetic modification in New Zealand:

where, how, and for what purpose genetic modification, genetically modified organisms, and products are being used in New Zealand at present

Three categories of genetic modification activity occur across land-based production, environment, human health and food production. These include:

- pure science exploration of genes and the manipulation of genes and DNA sequences
- applied research and technology development in which genetically modified products and genetic modification technologies are devised, evaluated and tested
- the end-use of genetic modification products, processes, organisms and technologies outside experimental or developmental contexts.

Amongst the public submissions, few provided details about activities, other than anecdotal information about what they believed was occurring. However, some of the more substantial submissions, especially those from related industry and research organisations, contained detail about current activity. Most, however, provided general references to activity submitters believed were occurring with little or no detail about the exact location of it.

Outline of this section

This section of the report shows public submitters' perceptions about how and where genetic modification technology is currently used in New Zealand.

Table 3.9 Public submitters' perceptions of genetic modification use in New Zealand and overseas (n = 7641)

Perceived uses	Number	%
Food unspecified	4858	63.6
General reference to GMOs, products or items	4040	52.9
Crops – food production	2463	32.2
Crops – non-food production	2263	29.6
Applied research – farming production (including field trials)	1774	23.2
Pure research	930	12.2
Environmental management (includes possum control)	600	7.9
Human health – non-defined	569	7.4
Human health – treatment	425	5.6
Horticulture – food	320	4.2
Farming not otherwise defined	294	3.8
Stock – food	210	2.7
Horticulture – non-food production	183	2.4
Food manufacturing	179	2.3
Applied research – human health	177	2.3
Stock – non-food	128	1.7
Animal health – non-defined	85	1.1
Applied research – animal health	83	1.1
Forestry production – undefined	76	1.0
Dairy	71	0.9
Fish production	64	0.8
Applied research – forestry	56	0.7
Human health – vaccines	49	0.6
Applied research – environmental protection	44	0.6
Human health – diagnostics/testing	23	0.3
Bee and honey production	21	0.3
Other manufacturing	16	0.2
Animal health – diagnostics/testing	10	0.1
Animal health – vaccines	7	0.1
Game production	5	0.1

Multiple response

How genetic modification technology is being used

Although Warrant item (a) sought information about where, how and for what purpose genetic modification activities were currently occurring in New Zealand, submitters rarely referred to the purpose of activities and where they might occur.

Public submitters also often wrote about genetic modification activities here and overseas, rather than limiting their comments to New Zealand. Further, the activities they listed were concentrated in the areas about which they expressed most anxiety. As Table 3.9 shows, these were food related: food (unspecified) and crops for food.

It was difficult to assess whether or not public submitters were aware of the wide range of applications for genetic modification. The vast majority limited their comments to genetically modified food, but it is unclear whether this was because that was the only application of which they were aware, or whether they were primarily concerned with food and merely chose not to comment on other areas (eg medical applications).