



Notification: 1903
Date: 8th October 2019
Category: Update to the Australian Certified Organic Standard (ACOS) 2019v1
Title: Genetic Engineering / GMO definition update

Background

The Australian Federal Government has deregulated a certain type of gene editing technology, by means of an amendment to the Gene Technology Regulation (2001). The amendment states that the gene editing method known as SDN-1 (Site Directed Nuclease method 1 – without repair template) falls outside their definition of Genetic Engineering.

The organic industry globally DOES consider this method to be Genetic Engineering, and as such considers produce derived from such methods to be GMO, and accordingly, prohibited from use in organic agriculture, or presence in organic products.

To ensure the exclusion of the method from Organic production under the Australian Certified Organic Standard, an update has been made, as below.

Update to Standard

Insert, “encapsulation, gene deletion and doubling”, as below.

Section 2.

Definitions:

Genetic engineering (GE): A set of techniques from molecular biology by which the genetic material of plants, animals, microorganisms, cells and other biological units may be altered in ways or with results that could not be obtained by methods of natural mating and reproduction or natural recombination. Techniques of genetic modification include, but are not limited to: recombinant DNA, cell fusion, and micro and macro injection, **encapsulation, gene deletion and doubling**. Genetically engineered organisms will not include organisms resulting from techniques such as conjugation, transduction and hybridisation.

Implementation

The above changes come into effect immediately upon publishing of this Notification.

END