NEWSLETTER
Recombinant DNA Monitoring Committee
February 2018 Issue 12

Your IBC

Farewell to Professor David Tscharke and Dr Harry Korres who departed from the IBC at the end of 2017. Many thanks to Professor Tscharke for fulfilling the role of Deputy Chair and for his contribution to the committee over the past 10 years. Many thanks also to Dr Korres for his contribution to the IBC over the past 3 years.

Welcome to new IBC members Dr Alex Maier (RSB), Dr Leonie Quinn (JCSMR) and Dr Kate Hannan (JCSMR).

Farewell and thank you to Ms Dianne Gooding and welcome to Ms Holly Burke who will be replacing Ms Gooding as the IBC liaison officer at the APF.

Release of proposed amendments to the Gene Technology Regulations

In December 2016, the ANU provided a response to the OGTR’s Technical Review of the Gene Technology Regulations. Following on from this review, the OGTR released draft amendments to the Regulations in November 2017. The consultation period for feedback relating to the draft amendments expires on 21 February.

The key proposals are:
1) Regarding new technologies, organisms modified using site-directed nucleases without templates to guide genome repair (i.e. SDN-1) would not be regulated as GMOs.
2) Regarding RNAi, it will be proposed to list the application of RNA molecules to induce RNAi as a technique that is not gene technology provided the RNA cannot give rise to changes to genomic sequence and cannot be translated into proteins.
3) Regarding gene drives, it will be proposed to require a licence for all contained dealings with gene drive GMOs.

Four consultation documents have been released. These are available on the OGTR’s webpage at http://ogtr.gov.au/internet/ogtr/publishing.nsf/Content/reviewregulations-1.

Review of the Gene Technology Scheme

In 2017, the Legislative and Governance Forum on Gene Technology (the LGFGT) announced a review of the National Gene Technology Scheme. Phase 1 of the review was to identify the issues requiring consideration as part of the review. This phase took place in August/September. Phase 2 of the review involved consultation with stakeholders to obtain information relating to the issues identified in Phase 1. This consultation took place in November/December. The ANU provided responses to both phases of the review with IBC members, liaison officers and GMO users being invited to provide feedback for both submissions.

Annual PC2 Facility Inspections 2017

Thank you to everyone for preparing their PC2 areas for the annual IBC inspections which were performed between September and December. Thank you to Anesh Nair, Stephanie McCaffery and Farid Rahimi for assisting the rDNA officer, Carly Owen, with the inspections.

Please remember that it is compulsory for all staff working with GMOs approved under NLRDs/DNIRs to complete the Gene Technology Practices and Biological Safety courses. This training needs to be
updated every 5 years. Please also remember that training records need to be updated regularly in your facility manuals. It is a Condition of Certification for PC2 facilities that staff complete the required training and that a written record of the training be kept and maintained.

**Annual Reports and Location Information forms**

By now all NLRD and DNIR holders should have received their Annual Report and Location Information forms from the IBC Secretary via email. **These forms must be completed and returned by COB Thursday 1 March.** It is a condition of approval for all NLRDs/DNIRs that these forms are completed annually for the duration of the approval. Failure to comply with this requirement may jeopardise the continuation of your approval.

**NLRD applications**

In 2017, 34 NLRD applications were received and reviewed by the IBC. This was a significant increase from the 13 applications received in 2016 and 11 in 2015. **Please remember you should allow up to 6 weeks for approval of NLRD applications.**

**IBC Website**

On our website you can find information about GMOs with links to OGTR requirements, copies of our newsletters, facility inspection requirements, information about applying for approval for dealings (exempt, NLRD, DNIR or DIR), application forms and more. We invite you to visit us at [https://researchservices.anu.edu.au/ori/rdna/index.php](https://researchservices.anu.edu.au/ori/rdna/index.php)

**Work with any type of GMO must be approved by the IBC**

If you are working with recombinant organisms of any type (including transformed cell lines and routine cloning) **you must have the written approval of the IBC.** The IBC has an obligation to ensure that all GM work (including exempt work) is correctly classified and that all GM work classified as non-exempt is monitored. Please email rdna.officer@anu.edu.au describing your work and you will receive prompt and helpful feedback.

**Unintentional Releases**

Unintentional releases need to be reported to the OGTR via the IBC Secretary. Liaison Officers should make sure this requirement is widely known in their local area. Local procedures for reporting unintentional releases (which include reporting to the IBC Secretary) should be included in facility manuals for easy reference.

**Need help?**

Contact the IBC Secretary,
T: 6125 5325
E: rdna.officer@anu.edu.au