



OIA23-0327

20 July 2023

Claire Bleakely
obleakley@gmail.com

Dear Claire Bleakely

Thank you for your email of 7 June 2023 requesting information relating to Genetically Modified Eucalyptus trial, ERMA200825. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested:

Please can I have all the annual monitoring reports relating to ERMA200825 from 2012 -2022.

Please consider this an OIA request?

ArborGen NZ was approved to import transgenic eucalyptus and disarmed strains of *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* into containment under ERMA200825 approval (30 May 2011). This approval required ArborGen NZ to operate under MAF/ERMA New Zealand Standard: *Facilities for Microorganisms and Cell Cultures: 2007a* and the MAF/ERMA New Zealand Standard: *Containment Facilities for Plants: 2007* Standards.

Work under the ERMA approval in ArborGen NZ was terminated in July 2012. The last vials of imported *Agrobacterium* were destroyed in late 2015 and the Bioengineering laboratory (PC2) was closed in 2016. ArborGen NZ no longer operates under MAF/ERMA New Zealand Standard: *Facilities for Microorganisms and Cell Cultures: 2007a* and the MAF/ERMA New Zealand Standard: *Containment Facilities for Plants: 2007* Standards.

Please find attached as Appendix One the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI's) 1 December 2015 audit of ArborGen relating to ERMA200825. This report is the last MPI external verification before the laboratory was closed down by ArborGen NZ in 2016. Please note the laboratory name should read Bioengineering laboratory.

Please note some information in Appendix One has been withheld pursuant to the following sections of the OIA:

- section 9(2)(a) – *to protect the privacy of natural persons.*

MPI completed a search of physical and digital records for any annual monitoring reports relating to ERMA200825 from 2012-2016 and was unable to locate any further documents in scope. Therefore, further audit documents relating to ERMA200825 are declined pursuant to section 18(e) of the OIA – *that the document alleged to contain the information, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.*

MPI is satisfied that in the circumstances of this case, the withholding of the information is not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make the information available.

Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Ministry for Primary Industries at Official.InformationAct@mpi.govt.nz. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143 or at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alan Cook', with a small flourish at the end.

Alan Cook
Director Verification Services