

12 February 2021

Wendy McGuinness
McGuinness Institute
Email: wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org

Dear Wendy

OIA Request – 2020/08 – Partial Transfer from EPA to AgResearch

Points of Clarification: “O” & “Q”

Further to your email request dated **Friday, 8 January 2021** and copy letter from the EPA dated 3 August 2020 addressed to yourself (copy **attached**) we respond to your questions below:

“O” *We note that the latest audit report mentions collaborators. Can you advise if they have a benefit in this experiment and if yes, whether this benefit dilutes the so called benefit to New Zealand identified by the applicant. Our understanding is that at the time of the application there were no other entities that had a shareholding or reagreed benefit from the experiment. Please can you provide an update as this would dilute the benefits to New Zealand, as assessed under the legislation.*

Question O

We are unable to provide information to assist with your request made in point “O” (as above). In it you refer to an “audit report” but you do not specify (in the question) which audit report we were to provide information on.

We accept this information may have been referred to in preceding questions in the original OIA to the EPA. However, this is not reflected in the partial transfer to us. Could you please specify precisely which audit report you want information in regard to?

Additionally, the inexact and ambiguous phrasing you used in “O” meant your question was difficult to answer.

Could you please individually number each question (rather than group several together) and also signify each individual question with a question mark? This will provide us with more clarity in regard how many questions you have asked, and the precise nature of the information you seek. The block of text annotated “O” contains statements interwoven with requests for information and was difficult to interpret.

AgResearch Limited
NZBN: 9429 038 966 224

Corporate Office and
Lincoln Research Centre
1365 Springs Road, Lincoln 7674
Private Bag 4749, Christchurch 8140
T +64 3 321 8800

Ruakura Research Centre
10 Bisley Road, Hamilton 3214
Private Bag 3123, Hamilton 3240
T +64 7 856 2836

Grasslands Research Centre and
Hopkirk Research Institute
Tennent Drive, Palmerston North 4410
Private Bag 11008, Palmerston North 4442
Grasslands T +64 6 356 8019
Hopkirk T +64 6 351 8600

Invermay Agricultural Centre
176 Puddle Alley, Mosgiel 9092
Private Bag 50034, Mosgiel 9053
T +64 3 489 3809

Question Q

“Q” Has the EPA identified costs in terms of the accumulated costs to AgResearch to implement the experiments since 2010? If not, can you ask AgResearch to provide detailed costs?

We are unable to say whether *“the EPA has identified costs in terms of the accumulated costs to AgResearch to implement the experiments”* that you refer to in your information request which we will refer to here as *“Q”*.

We assume because the EPA transferred the question to AgResearch and that we have never been asked by the EPA to supply this information that the answer is therefore, no. For completeness we would draw your attention to the information we provided in response to your OIA request to us to which we responded to 11 September 2020 (Jo Brady). This was and remains the best estimate in regards to the cost of our “transgenic” animal research notwithstanding the different time period in the two requests.

2. What have been the total indirect costs to AgResearch for outdoor transgenic experiments annually since 1999? Note: This should include legal and media costs that are outside the approval process.

AgResearch is unable to provide a specific financial figure that would accurately reflect indirect costs associated with our “outdoor transgenic experiments”. As a Crown Research Institute, we maintain our own inhouse legal and communications teams. Their work is monitored and reported on. However, the cost of managing requests, liaising with media and other public-facing relationship management work, including Official Information Act responses, is not, as an independent work stream, accounted for. Certainly, there is a cost to maintaining this inhouse capability. However, the amount that could be attributed indirectly to “transgenic experiments” over the time frame specified would be insignificant.

Please note you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

pp: 

Jo Brady
Marketing & Communications Director