

# Research and analysis: Genetically Modified Organisms: Rothamsted Research (18/R08/01)

*Updated:* Updated as consent for Rothamsted Research to release genetically modified camelina, reference 18/R08/01 has been granted.

Consent documents for Rothamsted Research, to release genetically modified organisms for research purposes.

Each consent granted includes:

- consent letter (confirming consent and outlining any conditions)
- part A(1): Information required under schedule 1 of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) regulations 2002.
- part A(2-6): Details of related previous releases, including any data, results and risks.
- part B: Information about the release application to be included on the public register.

## **ACRE's advice**

- [ACRE advice: application for a trial of GM camelina \(18/R08/01\)](#)

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# Press release: £1 million of charity funds returned after Commission inquiry

Around £1 million of funds have been made available for charity as a result of the Charity Commission's engagement with a grant-making charity.

In an inquiry report published today, the regulator outlines how governance failings resulted in unauthorised payments totalling approximately £650,000 to three trustees who were acting as consultants for the charity's wholly owned subsidiary limited company.

The Commission opened its inquiry in February 2017 after newly appointed solicitors sought the current and former trustees' relief from liability for the unauthorised payments, as well as permission to sell 99% of its shares in the subsidiary limited company.

The inquiry looked into the administration, governance and management of the charity, specifically regarding decision making and conflicts of interest; whether the proposed sale was in the best interests of the charity; whether there had been any private benefit to the current and former trustees; and whether restitution of funds was necessary.

The inquiry found that the consultants were conflicted as they had been trustees of the charity at the time of the payments, and had failed to identify or adequately manage this conflict of interest. The trustees were also unable to demonstrate that adequate records of their decisions had been maintained.

The inquiry considered the payments amounted to significant private advantage and financial benefit, as well as a direct breach of the charity's governing document and the trustees' legal duties. The trustees were also in violation of company law which requires them, as directors, to ensure records of their decisions are retained for at least 10 years.

Although the inquiry recognised that the trustees had made "honest mistakes", there was a strict prohibition against private benefit in the governing document. The Commission therefore engaged further and the trustees agreed to seek recovery of the £650,000 and adopt a formal conflicts of interest policy.

After reviewing the charity's records the Commission was satisfied that the trustees had correctly managed conflicts of interest around the sale of the shares; the conflicted trustees had been removed from decision making and a new independent trustee appointed. The trustees had also sought independent professional advice and negotiated better terms to ensure that the sale was in the charity's best interest.

The Commission therefore granted consent under s105 and s201 of the Charities Act to authorise the transaction, resulting in a further £350,000 going to the charity.

The inquiry remained open to ensure that the repayment took place, and was closed on 20 February with the publication of this report.

**Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:**

Actively managing conflicts of interest is a fundamental principle of trustee decision making. We recognise that trustees are human beings who may make honest mistakes, but the bottom line is that you must always act in the best interests of your charity.

Our intervention has allowed this charity to claw back a significant amount of money that can now go to charitable causes. I hope this will encourage other charities to be mindful of their duties and consult our guidance when making important decisions.

The Commission's full report of its inquiry is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

**Notes to editors:**

1. The [Commission's policy](#) is to report on the outcome of statutory inquiries unless the public interest in not publishing would outweigh the public interest in publishing. The Commission carefully considered submissions from this charity which said that its identification in the inquiry report would be severely detrimental to the charity and its beneficiaries. However the Commission concluded that our findings should be published anonymously so that lessons could be learnt by other charities.
2. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
3. Search for charities on our [check charity tool](#).

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## **[Press release: Stanford-le-Hope man fined over £7,000 for fly-tipping](#)**

A man has been ordered to pay more than £7,000 in fines, compensation and costs after he admitted leaving mixed commercial waste on land owned by Thurrock Council.

Billy Prince illegally dumped the waste at a compound located on land at Stanford Road, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex in May 2015.

The compound is used to store street cleaning and highways team equipment and is not an authorised waste collection facility or site permitted for authorised waste disposal.

On 11 May 2015, Prince used a vehicle owned by his employer to unlawfully deposit a quantity of mixed commercial waste at the compound.

CCTV showed a vehicle which was later found to have been driven by Prince depositing waste at the site.

There was a large yellow sign at the compound entrance that stated 'No Tipping'.

The Environment Agency investigated the incident and determined that the offending was deliberate and undermined legitimate waste management activities. The offending caused inconvenience to the council and clean-up costs.

Prince was sentenced at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court last week. The court heard Prince had pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity and was 'very

remorseful' of his actions, having lost his job as a result.

He was fined £2,000, ordered to pay compensation to Thurrock Council to the value of £3,970, costs of £1,105 and a victim surcharge of £120.

Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader Lesley Robertson said she was pleased with the sentencing outcome, and it showed that the courts were taking such incidents seriously. She said:

A community order or custody, as well as a financial penalty, could have been imposed. As this was a single offence the penalty was reduced and the magistrates felt a financial penalty, which totalled more than £7,000, was appropriate.

This shows that even with a single fly tip the penalties are very high.

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## [News story: Improving the manufacture of new medicines: apply for funding](#)



Scientist at MeiraGTX, one of the winners in the first round of funding.

Innovate UK has up to £10 million to invest in projects that develop innovative manufacturing methods for producing medicines.

Funding is part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to support leading-edge healthcare. This challenge will invest £181 million over 4 years to speed up patient access to new drugs and treatments. It should return £1 billion to the UK economy.

### **New approaches must deliver big improvements**

The competition is seeking new approaches that can:

- improve commercially-viable manufacturing processes

- scale-up the production of new medicines through reliable and robust methods
- increase yield of active ingredient
- lower cost of production and goods

Medicines that are in scope are:

- advanced therapy medicinal products
- natural product medicines
- nucleic acid-based drugs
- prophylactic vaccines
- protein or peptide biopharmaceuticals
- small molecular weight pharmaceuticals
- virus and phage therapeutics

The competition will fund a variety of projects across different markets, technologies and medicines. These can include feasibility studies, industrial research and experimental development.

## **Competition information**

- the competition opens on 12 March 2018, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 9 April 2018
- projects must be led by a business and must include at least one SME
- we expect projects to have costs between £50,000 and £1.5 million and to last between 6 months and 30 months
- projects with costs below £100,000 can be led by an SME working on its own or with partners, while projects above £100,000 must be led by a business working with partners
- businesses can attract up to 70% of their project costs
- a briefing event will be held on 20 March 2018

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