

Crop and Food applies to grow more GM veges

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A public hearing in Christchurch this year will consider an application to field-test genetically modified (GM) vegetables in a 10-year research project.

The Institute for Crop and Food Research wants to plant GM onions, spring onions, garlic and leeks over 2.5 hectares at the Crown research institute's Lincoln facility southwest of Christchurch.

Onion seed would be planted directly in the ground under the proposal, with some plants allowed to flower in the field to produce seed. Plants would be "caged" to prevent the spread of pollen.

The Environmental Risk Management Authority (Erma) has received 123 submissions on the application, a fraction of the 1933 submissions received for Crop and Food's controversial GM onions application in 2003.

Erma general manager for new organisms Libby Harrison said a wide range of submissions had been received from community groups, iwi, scientists and members of the public interested in GM research.

She said Erma would produce an evaluation and review report on the application before the public hearing scheduled for August or September.

- NZPA