

20-D-01003

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 22 June 2020 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

All documents held by MFE concerning or relating to the EPA determination that the application of double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) to the cells of almost all plants and animals is not genetic modification (APP203395, 1 May 2018); Including but not limited to assessments, responses, and comments associated with the determination; Including emails and any attachments; That are dated 1 July 2019 or later and have not already been provided to the Sustainability Council.

Three documents have been identified as in scope of your request, as listed in the attached document schedule. As the majority of information found within these documents is out of scope of your request, the Ministry for the Environment is providing this information to you in the form of excerpts under section 16(1)(e) of the Act.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decisions in regard to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Executive Relations team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Glenn Wigley
Director, Waste and Resource Efficiency

Document schedule

Document no.	Document date	Content	Decisions	OIA sections applied
1	27 January 20	EPA Environment Fortnightly Update for Hon Eugenie Sage 27 January 2020	Released in part Some out of scope information has been removed	16(1)(e)
2	25 November 19	EPA Environment Fortnightly Update for Hon Eugenie Sage 25 November 2019	Released in part Some out of scope information has been removed	16(1)(e)
3	30 September 2019	EPA Environment Fortnightly Update for Hon Eugenie Sage 25 November 2019	Released in part Some out of scope information has been removed	16(1)(e)

Released under the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982

EPA Fortnightly Update for Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment

For the week starting 27 January 2020

This document is being provided to you in the form of an excerpt
under section 16(1)(e) of the Official Information Act 1982

Out of scope

Released under the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982

Pages 2 - 6 have been removed as they are Out of Scope of this request

Out of Scope

Double-stranded RNA technology

The Sunday Star Times published an article on 8 December 2019 that canvassed debate about the risks of using double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) molecules as sprays. The debate centred on whether dsRNA technology produced genetically modified organisms. Landcare Research has been conducting research in dsRNA technology. The EPA's New Organisms Manager, Dr Stephen Cobb, was quoted.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/118007830/fears-new-spray-on-chemical-in-leading-edge-science-could-spawn-biological-weapons>

Out of Scope

Pages 8 and 9 have been removed as they are Out of Scope of this request

Out of Scope

EPA Fortnightly Update for Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment

For the week starting 25 November 2019

This document is being provided to you in the form of an excerpt
under section 16(1)(e) of the Official Information Act 1982

Out of Scope

Released under the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982

Pages 2-4 have been removed as they are Out of Scope of this request

Out of Scope



Double-stranded RNA molecule treatment of plants (dsRNA)

Sunday Star Times asked what the benefits and drawbacks were of using dsRNA molecules to treat plants. It also asked who had applied to use the technique and when. We directed the journalist to the applicant information on our website.

Out of Scope



Out of Scope

Page 6 has been removed as it is Out of Scope of this request

EPA Fortnightly Update for Hon Eugenie Sage, Associate Minister for the Environment

For the week starting 30 September 2019

This document is being provided to you in the
form of an excerpt under section 16(1)(e) of the
Official Information Act 1982

Out of Scope

Released under the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982

Out of Scope

Reconsideration of dsRNA determination

Following the receipt of further information, the EPA's determination (made in May 2018) that eukaryotic organisms not treated with externally applied double-stranded RNA to induce a small interfering RNA (siRNA) response are not genetically modified organisms, has been referred to a Decision-making Committee (DMC) for reconsideration. The DMC has received submissions from Professor Jack Heinemann, the Sustainability Council, and Landcare Research (the original applicant). We will be seeking comments from the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Department of Conservation before preparing staff advice for the DMC.

Out of Scope

Out of Scope