

To: Miss Mandy POON
Clerk to Subcommittee
Legislative Council Secretariat
Email: mpoon@legco.gov.hk

21 May 2012

Dear Ms Poon,

Subcommittee on Genetically Modified Organisms
(Control of Release) (Exemption) Notice

I refer to your letter dated 16 May 2012 addressed to the Secretary of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Control of Release) Expert Group on the captioned matter.

As the Chairman of the Expert Group, I would like to provide the views of the Expert Group on the deliberations of the proposed exemption of GM papaya and live recombinant veterinary vaccines in order to facilitate consideration of relevant issues by the Subcommittee.

The Expert Group is established under Section 47 of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Control of Release) Ordinance and comprises members from different sectors, including environmental protection, academics, farming, biotechnology and trading sectors. The Expert Group performs an advisory role under the Ordinance to provide recommendation to the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation on the administration of the Ordinance, including the exemption arrangements being proposed.

At the first meeting held on 5 July 2011, AFCD submitted to the Expert Group risk assessment reports and recommendations on the exemption of GM papayas and live recombinant veterinary vaccines for our consideration. The risk assessment reports concluded that the risk to the biological diversity of the local environment posed by GM papayas and live recombinant veterinary vaccines is acceptable. The Expert Group had lengthy discussions on the risk assessment and disposal of GM papayas and live recombinant veterinary vaccines. The assessment and conclusions of

the reports were endorsed by the Expert Group after thorough deliberations.

Having considered the results of risk assessments and the deliberations made at the meeting, the Expert Group supported the recommendations to exempt GM papayas and live recombinant veterinary vaccines from the application of section 5 and section 7 of the Ordinance. In connection with the proposed exemption, the Expert Group further recommended that AFCD should continue to monitor the latest progress and development of GM papayas and live recombinant veterinary vaccines. AFCD should also carry out a review of the exemption in three years' time and report the findings of the review to the Expert Group. In addition, AFCD and other relevant bodies should step up publicity on GM crops and organic farming to both the general public and the stakeholders.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Wong', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Prof. Jonathan Wong. Ph.D. M.H.