



Media Release

25 February, 2003

GM crops – Ensure the choice is yours

Agrifood Awareness Australia today urged farmers to ensure the decision about genetically modified (GM) crops remains in their hands and that they look to credible sources for information.

Speaking at the Australian Women in Agriculture (AWiA) forum in Perth today, Paula Fitzgerald, Executive Manager, Agrifood Awareness Australia, said, "It is critical that farmers make choices for their own farm and business system, and that decisions about this technology are not based on misinformation generated by a handful of individuals working to stop GM crops."

"Claims, for example, that Japan does not accept GM products are incorrect, with Japan taking large quantities of Canada's GM canola," she said. "While it is true that Japan has requirements for some commodities, blanket statements such as these are not helpful in this debate."

"Australia has one of the best gene technology regulatory systems in the world, and internationally renowned scientists working in this area, to ensure Australia retains access to this important technology and that our farmers continue to be competitive in a global environment," she said.

"GM products must be judged on a case-by-case basis. It would be extremely harmful to Australian agriculture if it closed the door on an entire technology based on a decision or assumption about one GM product," she said.

"Our cotton industry has benefited enormously from this technology," she said. "Also the broader applications of biotechnology, and the potential it offers to farmers, such as marker assisted breeding cannot be ignored," she said.

"Australian women in agriculture have a unique opportunity to be involved in discussions about this technology and ensure it is an informed and balanced debate which will be critical for the future of Australian agriculture," she said.

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For further information contact:
Paula Fitzgerald on 0418 160 943

AWiA are hosting a GMO forum in Perth today (25 February), in the Octagon Theatre at the University of Western Australia.

Agrifood Awareness Australia is an industry initiative established in 1999 to increase public awareness of, and encourage informed debate about, gene technology. The organisation is supported by the National Farmers' Federation, Avcare and the Grains Research and Development Corporation.