



Media Release

28 August 2001

Dubbo GMO Forum – All Community Voices Critical

A forum to be held in Dubbo this evening to discuss gene technology presents an excellent opportunity for the community to gain an insight into the issue, and all members of the community should take the time to attend, according to Agrifood Awareness Australia.

We congratulate Dubbo Council on organising this event and encouraging informed debate on the topic," said Ms Paula Fitzgerald, Executive Manager, Agrifood Awareness Australia.

"Gene technology is a complex topic, so it is important that everyone attains credible, balanced information," she said.

"All decisions about gene technology and particularly genetically modified (GM) crops must involve all members of the community," she said.

"It is important that any decisions do not close the door on future opportunities, and such an event also offers a chance for councils to understand their role in this debate, particularly under the new regulatory system," she said.

"We have worked with a number of councils during the year in helping them to better understand this topic," she said. "Unfortunately this is not always easy, particularly as the debate is being clouded by misinformation," she said.

"Recent claims by the GeneEthics network that 'GM crops are being recklessly pushed onto farmers and food buyers' are simply untrue," said Ms Fitzgerald. "One only has to look beyond the borders of Dubbo Council to see how rapidly the cotton industry has embraced GM cotton," she said.

"Genetically modified cotton, with in-built protection against heliothis, has been commercially available in Australia since 1996," she said. "Over the past five years, this cotton has reduced pesticide applications by approximately 50 per cent," she said.

"Genetically modified cotton is certainly an example of a product which has delivered benefits both to the cotton industry and the local communities," she said.

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The GMO forum will be held at 7pm at the Dubbo RSL Club. Speakers include Dr Gary Fitt (CEO, Australian Cotton Co-operative Research Centre), Dr Mark Lonsdale (CSIRO), Mr Neil Ellis (Office of the Gene Technology Regulator), and Mr Hugh Roberts (NSW Farmers' Association).

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