



MEDIA RELEASE

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GM Wheat – Grain industry facts

The Australian grain industry is alarmed by a Greenpeace report *Australia's Wheat Scandal* claiming GM wheat will be here by 2015 and that Australian farmers produce unsafe food.

"GM wheat will not be commercially available for at least seven to 10 years. Statements suggesting it will be available in 2015 are absolutely false," said Paula Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer, Agrifood Awareness Australia.

"This is simply another attempt by Greenpeace to irresponsibly create fear and undertake scaremongering about safe plant science and new crop varieties that are at least seven to 10 years away from the marketplace," Ms Fitzgerald said.

Representatives from the Australian grain sector met in Melbourne this month to discuss GM wheat. The participants, including seed companies, farmers, research organisations, and grain handlers and marketers, are committed to ongoing dialogue and transparent communication over the coming years.

GM wheat research in progress includes developments in grain yield, drought/heat tolerance, nitrogen use efficiency, frost tolerance, and fungal disease resistance.

"The grain sector recognises that gene technology is an important tool to address global agronomic and food production needs, including food security, climate, and disease challenges and human health applications, and ensure Australia remains globally competitive," Ms Fitzgerald said.

"The sector will continue to work together – and with overseas partners – to build on the GM Wheat Trilateral Statement launched in 2009 and prepare an agreed and responsible path-to-market for GM wheat.

"It is extremely concerning that the Greenpeace report questions much of the good work underway in our scientific organisations," she said. "CSIRO is an iconic, world class scientific agency responsible for much of our everyday health, welfare and technology. To suggest the organisation is engaging in unsafe science and not delivering benefits to Australians is both false and mischievous.

"Australian farmers do not, and will not in the future, produce unsafe food," said Ms Fitzgerald. "Farming is a business – a food production business. Farmers need technology and tools to produce safe, affordable food in the most efficient way, which includes looking after our natural resources as this is their most valuable asset.

"Last year Greenpeace Australia Pacific raised a huge \$12.6 million through auto giving alone. Let's hope those making donations realise that this is simply another fundraiser, with their money being spent on attacking Australia's peak science agency and trying to deny Australian farmers new tools to meet production challenges and put good food on our supermarket shelves," she said.

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For further information:

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Background

- A copy of the 2009 GM wheat trilateral statement is at: www.afaa.com.au/news/news_pdf_057_FINAL_Trilateral_Biotech_Statement.pdf
- The 2010 brochure detailing Australia's approach to GM Wheat entitled "GM wheat – fact not fiction, a 7-10 year program of collaboration" is at: www.afaa.com.au/GM_wheat_2010/AFAA_GMWheatBrochure_WEB.pdf
- A communiqué from the July 2011 GM Wheat Industry Roundtable meeting is at: www.afaa.com.au