

Media Release

www.adelaide.edu.au/news

Friday 8 February 2008

GM canola ban “disappointing”

The South Australian Government's decision to extend a moratorium on genetically modified canola is not supported by scientific evidence and may send the wrong message about the role of science in agriculture, experts in plant science and technology say.

The experts – based at the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics (ACPF) at the University of Adelaide's Waite Campus – say Australian farmers should be provided with every technology, whether GM or not, to help overcome the ravaging effects of national problems such as drought and salinity.

The State Government's decision is “disappointing” says University of Adelaide Federation Fellow Professor Mark Tester, and the Director of the University's Waite Campus, Professor Geoff Fincher, both based at the ACPF.

“This decision is not supported by the extensive scientific evidence that has been accumulated over 10 years in many countries around the world and could send negative signals to the community about the potential benefits of science and the application of new technologies,” Professor Tester says.

Currently the Federal Government, through the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, monitors all genetic modification research on a case-by-case basis, under stringent control guidelines.

“Most cases show that in recent years, countries with access to genetically modified crops have reaped environmental benefits, particularly in the developing world. There is little doubt in the scientific community that genetic modification is part of a sustainable farming future,” says the Director of the University of Adelaide's Waite Campus and Deputy CEO of the ACPF, Professor Geoff Fincher.

“We need to ensure that the community is properly informed of the issues related to the application of this technology. We hope that South Australian farmers will be given the opportunity to use this technology in the future for the benefit of farmers, consumers and the environment,” Professor Tester says.

Media Contact:

Professor Mark Tester
ARC Federation Fellow
School of Agriculture, Food and Wine
The University of Adelaide
Business: +61 8 8303 7159
Mobile: 0423 784 428
mark.testers@acpfg.com.au

Professor Geoff Fincher
Director
Waite Campus
The University of Adelaide
Business: +61 8 8303 7296
Mobile: + 61 419 821 100
geoff.fischer@adelaide.edu.au

David Ellis
Media Officer
The University of Adelaide
Phone: +61 8 8303 5414
Mobile: 0421 612 762
david.ellis@adelaide.edu.au