



MEDIA STATEMENT

Tuesday 27 November 2007

A step forward for Australian agriculture – GM canola delivers choice

Agrifood Awareness Australia welcomed today's decisions by the New South Wales and Victorian Governments to allow the commercialisation of approved GM canola varieties to go ahead.

"Today's decision is a step forward for Australian agriculture as it will allow all members of the grain supply chain to access the products of their choice," said Paula Fitzgerald, Executive Director, Agrifood Awareness Australia Limited.

"The two canola types were approved by Australia's regulator in 2003 and deemed to be as safe as the conventional varieties we currently grow," she said. "This is not a question about safety.

"Industry and governments have used the time since 2003 to carefully examine market and trade considerations," she said.

"The Australian grains industry has the processes and protocols in place to introduce GM canola into the grain production and marketing system.

"In August, the grain industry released a statement, entitled *Delivering market choice with GM canola*, which was endorsed by 29 key organisations," she said. "This statement recognised that choice is the underlying principle and the industry is committed to delivering this to all customers – be they growers or food processors," she said.

"Genetically modified canola types have been grown, consumed and traded around the world for over a decade," she said. "Now Australian farmers will have the opportunity, if they choose, to utilise these new varieties," she said.

"Recent studies from Australian universities have shown that GM canola offers superior weed control, as well as higher yields, oil quality and overall profitability. There is also a reduction in herbicide use," she said.

Ms Fitzgerald said the New South Wales and Victorian governments are to be congratulated for allowing the commercialisation of GM canola.

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