

Media Release



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AusBiotech supports access to GM crops in Victoria

The announcement today by the Victorian Premier John Brumby and the Minister for Agriculture Joe Helper that the commercial cultivation of Genetically Modified (GM) canola in Victoria will be allowed in 2008 is supported by AusBiotech.

“The introduction of the Victorian canola moratorium in 2004 caused a great deal of uncertainty to both research and commercial organisations developing GM technology in crops, at least for GM canola this uncertainty has been removed” Dr Anna Lavelle, CEO of AusBiotech, said.

“GM crops are thoroughly regulated and assessed at the Federal level for both human and environmental health and safety and for use as food” she explained “Marketing considerations for GM crops should be left to the industry and not regulated at the State level”.

“For the past 10 years both Australian cotton farmers and the environment has benefited from GM cotton which has reduced insecticide use by up to 75%” said Dr Lavelle.

For the past three years, no commercial GM crops have been allowed to be cultivated in Victoria, although trials were permitted under Exemption Orders.

Recently the grain industry outlined their capacity to deliver and manage the commercial introduction of GM canola in Australia.

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“Groups opposed to the introduction of GM crops will not be happy with the decision” said Dr Ian Edwards, Chair of the AusBiotech Agricultural Advisory Committee, “However, internationally farmers in both developing and developed countries are adopting the technology and it is time Australian farmers have that same choice”.

“Australian cotton farmers and more importantly Canadian canola farmers have been using GM crops since 1996, now Victorian farmers can evaluate if GM canola will fit into their production systems” said Dr Lavelle.

“Victoria has always supportive of GM crop research, now the industry knows that commercialisation of GM crops is possible allowing Victorian farmers access to this technology” she concluded.

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