



Media Release

Caution required on GM 'advice'

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The Australian community is urged to be very cautious when taking 'advice' from anti-GM groups.

This follows astonishing claims from Gene Ethics that the Australian cotton crop has been diminished by its adoption of GM technology! - rather than by Australia's one in a hundred year drought.

The National Convenor of the grass-roots farmer body Producers Forum, Jeff Bidstrup said, "It is more than that these people are out of touch with reality. Statements such as this mis-represent the truth, and play the 'fear factor'. It's yet another stunt."

Mr Bidstrup went on to say that activists have escorted around Australia a so-called deputation of Canadian farmers, offering 'advice' at public meetings and to media looking for the next big story. It's been purported they represent Canadian canola growers, but the President of the Canola Council of Canada, Stewart Gilroy said:

"The anti-GMO messaging is as ludicrous in Australia as it once was in Canada. However, over time, the scaremongering tactics get old and will eventually subside. I think common sense will prevail, as this is a great technology and it has been a key factor in building Canada's canola industry into a \$13 billion industry that continues to grow every year. In fact, it is proving to be a competitive advantage for Canada in maintaining and expanding our markets around the world."

And Brian Tischler, President of the Canadian Canola Growers Association that represents 95 percent of Canadian growers said:

"On my farm, and on the farms of over 50,000 canola producers in Canada, we are reaping the benefits from this technology which offers better weed control, less herbicide use, less tillage of the land, and higher yields and profits. Over 95% of canola grown in Canada is now genetically modified. These are the facts. It amazes me how we continue to hear anti-GMO rhetoric that has no validity or credibility. I guess a few individuals crave the media attention and say whatever it takes to draw attention to themselves and their cause".

Mr Bidstrup said this week an old anti-GM warhorse will re-appear when Percy Schmeiser is trotted out. "Just ask Percy: what was the actual judgement on his Canadian court case? Also ask him who is funding his second trip to Australia?"

"Given that farm organisations from the NFF down support GM technology, it is sad to see governments making decisions based on all this 'advice'. It is sad to see green groups pushing anti-farm, anti-technology, anti-environment stances," he said.

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The Producers Forum is a national group of agricultural producers. For further information see www.producersforum.net.au

Editors note: In 1997 Schmeiser saved surviving canola seed from plants sprayed with Roundup herbicide on his farm and then used them in planting his 1998 canola crop. See the judge's decision at <http://decisions.fct-cf.gc.ca/en/2001/2001fct256/2001fct256.html> - especially paragraphs 39, 40, 102, 103, 104, 119, and 125.