

GRDC supports grower choice

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The decision by the New South Wales and Victorian Governments to lift their moratoria on the commercial production of genetically modified (GM) canola is welcomed by GRDC Chairman, Keith Perrett.

Mr Perrett, a NSW graingrower, said the decision provided growers in these states the chance to bridge the technology gap with their main competitors in north and south America.

He said that more than a decade's experience with GM canola varieties in other countries had demonstrated the technology's safety and its clear environmental and commercial benefits.

"The decision now places the Australian canola industry on a level footing with its' international competitors.

"Today's announcement provided greater choice and certainty for the Australian grains industry and the GRDC", Mr Perrett said.

He predicted it would also encourage further research in Australia of other important GM applications that scientists were confident would speed-up the breeding of crops that would be:

- more resilient to prolonged dry periods
- tolerant to saline conditions
- resistant to pests and disease
- able to confer direct health and nutrition benefits to consumers.

"This announcement provides a clear path forward that will allow Australian grain growers to benefit from a much-needed technology boost to enhance their international competitiveness in global grain markets".

"It also means that growers will be better equipped to face challenges such as climate change with increased confidence.

"The Australian grains industry is committed to delivering market choice and has worked hard to develop processes and protocols for the management of GM and non-GM grains within the Australian grains supply chain.

"The processes and protocols have received widespread industry endorsement by representative industry organisations and grower bodies, including grain handlers and marketers.

"I encourage the South Australian Government to acknowledge the benefits of this technology and follow the lead of the NSW and Victorian Governments to give South Australian growers an opportunity to more effectively compete with their overseas competitors", Mr Perrett said.

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