



National Farmers'
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NSW & Victorian farmers cast-off out-dated GM shackles

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“NSW AND Victorian farmers can now capitalise on the opportunities gene technology poses for agricultural production – finally able to develop more environmentally-sustainable, drought-resistant and better yielding crops,” National Farmers’ Federation (NFF) President David Crombie said today as the NSW and Victorian Governments lifted their moratoria on genetically-modified (GM) crops.

“This will make farmers more efficient and competitive on the world stage. For too long, Australian farmers have been left behind as the international marketplace embraced biotechnology as a safe and viable agricultural science.

“In the past we all – including the NFF – had adopted a prudent ‘wait and see’ policy while this science was in its infancy. The science, now well established, has seen the world move on and we must do likewise. Today’s announcements allow us to ‘catch up’ and win a greater share of world markets, opportunities that, while the moratoria remained, passed Australian farmers by.

“Farmers must have the opportunity to pursue production methods best suited to their customers’ needs – be that GM, conventional, organic or any combination of these. These are points of differentiation farmers pursue in meeting their customers’ desires.

“The marketplace – both here and overseas – is crying out for GM crops. Australian farmers will now be in a position to use sensible, scientifically-proven and time-tested methods of production. The NFF maintains that the production decisions of one farmer, or groups of farmers, must not unreasonably impinge on the ability of other farmers in meeting the requirements and expectations of the market they chose to meet.

“Australian farmers are well-placed to responsibly harness the enormous opportunities gene technology offers the environment... reducing use of pesticides and herbicides, maximising water efficiency, developing resilience in adverse growing conditions and boosting production yields.

“Naturally, it is vital that producers identify, and thoroughly assess, potential risks and implement strategies to manage them. The NFF is satisfied Australia’s safeguards – through the Gene Technology Act 2000 – ensure both food safety and the sustained integrity of organic and conventional food production.

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“Australia enjoys the world’s most stringent standards in assessing human and environmental safety regarding GM plants. Preservation of Australia’s rigorous gene technology regulatory system is paramount.

“We also recognise the readiness and capacity of the agricultural supply chain to ensure integrity in delivery systems, ensuring there is no cross contamination between GM and non-GM produce.

“We urge other State Governments to follow NSW and Victoria’s lead and lift their out-dated moratoria. As these states illustrate, Australian agriculture has the ability to meet customer demands, rendering such bans unnecessary and denying farmers’ legitimate choices.”

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The NFF’s Fact Sheet, [GM Crops: Questions & Answers](#), is available here.

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