



SA Farmers Loose Out in GM Moratorium Decision

Media Release

Friday February 8, 2008

Today's decision by the South Australian Government to extend the moratorium on GM canola shackles the state's farmers to the past.

Mr Jeff Bidstrup, National Convenor of the Producers Forum, said that Australian farmers have stayed competitive by being in the forefront of technology development and adoption, but SA farmers who have suffered the effects of a prolonged drought, are to again be denied the use of approved proven technology.

"The South Australian government has locked its world-class farmers and researchers out of this global agricultural and food processing technological revolution," he said.

"Canola growers in Victoria and New South Wales will have access to GM canola varieties this year, giving them more efficient and economic weed control options - as resoundingly demonstrated by Charles Sturt University researchers.

"It is absurd that canola growers in SA will continue to be denied the use of GM herbicide tolerant varieties, while their competitors around the world are happily increasing GM canola production and grinning on their way to the bank," Mr Bidstrup said.

"Also, the environmental benefits of GM technology are clear. The impact of climate change is a serious concern for all the community and yet SA farmers cannot use a proven and safe technology that reduces soil erosion and greenhouse gas production.

"The SA government has put politics before reality in reacting to a campaign based on ideology and misinformation.

"Alas, if it had rationally acknowledged all the scientific facts and market signals, and accepted its own expert group's recommendation, then SA farmers would be participating with their colleagues in NSW and Victoria in a revitalised canola industry," he said.

Mr Bidstrup notes that just yesterday it was announced that Australia's first genetically modified bananas could be growing in North Queensland by mid-year. "South Australian and Western Australia governments seem to desire having their constituents living behind time," he said.

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