

## Victorian Farmers Welcome Choice on GM

Tuesday, 27 November 2007

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has congratulated the Premier today on his announcement that after an extensive review of Genetically Modified (GM) Canola the State-wide moratorium banning its use will not be extended.

The moratorium was implemented in 2003 in response to concerns that a Victorian GM Canola industry may damage the state's export markets and will be sunsetted in February 2008. In 2007 the Government announced the establishment of an independent panel, led by Victoria's Chief Scientist Sir Gustav Nossal, to review the moratorium.

VFF President Simon Ramsay applauded the Victorian Government, Premier John Brumby and Agriculture Minister Joe Helper, for their strong leadership on the issue.

"There has been a lot of scaremongering recently and it is significant that the Premier and Minister for Agriculture have adopted the recommendations of the panel in full. Today's decision on GM has been based on sound scientific, rational and objective advice and will benefit farmers, the environment and the Victorian economy," Mr Ramsay said.

"Agriculture is changing. The impacts of climate change and a global economy need to be managed. Providing farmers with the ability to choose to use world's best technology, is essential to maintaining a strong and profitable farm sector."

"Whilst a number of anti-GM groups have attempted to cast doubt on this technology the reality is that all the credible evidence demonstrates its benefits. The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) approved GM five years ago and the four year moratorium was set in place only to assess trade risks. Now that these risks have been comprehensively swept aside it's the right time for farmers to be provided with a choice."

"The VFF has campaigned tirelessly to provide farmers with access to leading agricultural technology. It is good to see that credible science has overcome alarmism, misinformation, and a campaign of fear."

"GM canola will offer our grain growers higher yields, better weed control, and increased profitability. Across the world the growth in this technology is substantial. In 2006, there were 102 million hectares of GM crops grown on some 10 million farms across 22 countries."

"The Government's decision to lift the GM ban will enable Victorian growers to get down to the business of farming on an equal footing with their international competitors," Mr Ramsay concluded.

#### Media Contact

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