
Thursday, 17 April 2008

GM CROPS MORATORIUM EXTENDED

The State Government has moved to extend the ban on GM crops in SA following Cabinet approval to extend existing regulations under the *Genetically Modified Crops Management Act 2004*.

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister, Rory McEwen said the regulations extended the ban indefinitely beyond the current expiry date on April 29 this year.

“Under the terms of the Act, the Government was required to undertake a further six week period of public consultation which included a series of public meetings around the state in March,” Mr McEwen said.

“This provided individuals, community organisation and the grains industry with a further opportunity to have their say on GM crops and include any updated information for the State Government to take into account.

“The six week of public consultation showed there’s a divergence of opinion about the impact of GM crop cultivation on markets and trade for our produce. This came up in the 7 public meetings, the 38 letters and 83 formal submissions.

“However, 81% of the submissions and 97% of the letters supported retaining the moratorium.

“Our view is that at present we believe there’s no compelling reason to lift the ban for growing GM crops for human consumption in SA,” Mr McEwen said.

“We will be closely watching to see how NSW and Victoria address the key issues of segregation and regulation in their states, as well as monitoring the benefits of keeping the moratorium in WA and Tasmania.

“We will also continue to listen to the views of farmers and the industry, but for now it makes more sense to maintain the status quo until there’s more certainty regarding the impact of exporting GM grains.

“The effectiveness of the current arrangements will be monitored as the cultivation of GM canola in Victoria and NSW proceeds to help assess the level of regulation required to protect markets and trade for SA products,” Mr McEwen said.