



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Agriculture and Food**

Minister for Agriculture and Food

Media Statement

Attention: News Editor/Chief of Staff

23/12/08

STATE GOVERNMENT APPROVES SMALL SCALE COMMERCIAL GM CANOLA TRIALS

The State Government today announced its decision to allow approval of limited commercial-size trials for genetically modified canola to go ahead in Western Australia.

Agriculture and Food Minister Terry Redman said the announcement will allow trial crops to be planted in 2009 involving around 20 farmers and approximately 1000 hectares.

“This decision is a prudent and responsible one - to proceed in a cautious manner by allowing research to continue into the use of GM technology. I firmly believe the role of any Government is to ensure farmers have the choice and the tools to expand their businesses and grow their profitability,” Mr Redman said.

“GM canola could potentially offer higher yields through better weed control and less fuel usage. Successful development of Roundup Ready canola could see canola grown over lower rainfall areas. This would be a great outcome for the entire state.”

“The locations of the trials are to be determined. Growers that are interested will undergo stewardship training and then the proponent together with CBH will select up to 20 growers to undertake the trials under conditions approved by the Director-General of the Department of Agriculture and Food.

“I am confident that CBH has the protocols in place to manage the co-existence process to effectively segregate GM and non-GM canola through the transport, storage and marketing processes. These trials will assess those protocols as well as look at the agronomic performance of the crop.

“The Department of Agriculture and Food will work collaboratively with industry through the trials and assist all industry participants with auditing and on-site inspection of the new trials. The Department will then analyse the results of the trials.”

“The decision follows a long consultative process with industry, the public, Local Government, and overseas experience.”

Mr Redman said there would be stringent safeguards in place for the management of these trials.

“The trials will be managed in a closed-loop system which requires the product to be delivered to a specified receival point and processed by specified oil crushers.

“This is the same management system that is being used successfully in New South Wales and Victoria, where Roundup Ready canola was grown for the first time this year.”

Mr Redman said that he recognised concern in the community surrounding the issue of labelling in regard to GM food products.

“Labelling is an issue that requires a national perspective which is why I am following the national review of labelling with great interest. Linked in with this, I am establishing a WA intergovernmental committee. This committee will investigate the issues of appropriate consumer information, labelling requirements and compliance with regard to GM foods,” he said.

ENDS

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