



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **GM crops – more global growth**

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The release of statistics detailing the sustained global wave of GM crop adoption is further evidence of the value and benefit to farmers, communities and consumers of this key agricultural technology.

New South Wales Producers Forum spokesperson, Wayne McKay, says the 2008 global GM crop statistics from ISAAA show just how popular approved GM crops are.

"The report notes that an additional 1.3 million farmers planted 10.7 million new hectares of GM crops in three new countries in 2008; while 13.3 million farmers in a record 25 countries planted 125 million hectares of GM crops last year, the sixth largest growth spurt in 13 years of reporting.

"The two billionth cumulative acre of GM crops was also planted in 2008, just three years after the first billionth acre, a milestone which required a decade to reach."

This data is contained within the just-released ISAAA report *Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops 2008*. (See: [www.isaaa.org](http://www.isaaa.org)). ISAAA has been tracking global biotech crop trends since 1996.

Mr McKay notes also that key overseas markets and producers appreciate the need to adopt proven science for food security. "The European Union has acknowledged that GM crops 'can play an important role in mitigating the effects of the food crises', and while France did not plant GM crops in 2008, Spain, Czech Republic, Romania, Portugal, Germany, Poland and Slovakia increased their planting 21 per cent to again total more than 100,000 hectares.

"And in China, Premier Wen Jiabao has said 'to solve the food problem, we have to rely on big science and technology measures, rely on biotechnology, rely on GM.'"

Mr McKay says Australian broadacre farmers will increasingly participate in the global trend. "With largely positive experiences from the first commercially grown GM canola crops in NSW and Victoria last year, we're all expecting to see a large increase in planting in 2009 – weather depending. Farmers are voting with their feet.

"Along with the continuing very high use of GM varieties in the cotton industry, and the limited commercial release of GM canola in Western Australia this year, farmers in these states will be able to capture the production and sustainability benefits of GM varieties, and importantly, remain competitive in overseas markets."

He says this casts a long shadow on the ongoing bizarre claims and activities of anti-GM activists. "Greenpeace and its linked Network of Concerned Farmers handful are now promoting some more events that preach to the converted and anyone who might listen, effectively clouding the science about GM.

"In the light of the internationally recognised ISAAA report, and all the reports that have been issued in recent years by Australian Government agencies about the health, safety, environmental benefits and market acceptance of approved GM varieties, their's is a misguided effort.

"Greenpeace should acknowledge that the world is moving on; GM is a non-cause," he said.

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### **For further information:**

Wayne McKay-NSW spokesperson 0428 259 345, Jeff Bidstrup-National Convenor 0427 063 270,  
Rod Birch-WA spokesperson 0427 523 240, Chris Kelly-Victorian coordinator 0409 508 122,  
Heather Baldock-South Australian coordinator 0428 101 416.