



Media Release

Why is no news on GM, news in WA?

Friday 6 March, 2009

Imported axe-grinders are being escorted around Australia, peddling a tail of supposed misery and malfeasance about GM crops in the North American grains belt to anyone who'll listen.

The WA Convenor of the grassroots farm organisation, Producers' Forum, John Snooke, says the problem is that there are other very large aspects to their stories on GM crops which are being overlooked.

"How do the journos put it? – 'Don't let the facts get in the way of a good story'?"

"Mr Moe Parr, who owns a USA seed cleaning business, will spend six days travelling around our state; but will he mention that the United States District Court has issued a permanent injunction against him?"

The court prohibited him from cleaning Roundup Ready (GM) soybeans and required him to honour the patent by informing customers it is illegal to save Roundup Ready seed. Court papers state that 'the defendant knowingly cleaned saved Roundup Ready Soybean seed for growers ... intentionally mislead growers into believing that their cleaning and planting of Roundup Ready soybean seed would not infringe Monsanto's patent rights'.

(See: http://patentdocs.typepad.com/patent_docs/files/monsanto_v_parr.pdf)

Mr Snooke has some other questions: "What's the real news here? Did he break the law? Are his views and travel expenses all paid for? What relevance does USA soybeans have to WA canola? How is it that this hocus-pocus even makes the news? Does Mr Parr represent the views of the vast majority of USA and Canadian farmers? Why are so many farmers planning to grow GM canola varieties in NSW and Victoria this year?"

Mr Parr and Mr Ross Murray - an organic farmer from Saskatchewan, Canada - have already been escorted through Victoria and South Australia talking down an approved, proven and valuable agricultural technology that is being used by more and more farmers around the world each and every year.

Mr Snooke says the real news is that the Western Australian grains industry can now keep up with the rest of the world, adopt proven technology and deliver choice.

"WA farmers cannot afford to be shackled to the past and be subjects of activists' ideological campaigns.

"The position of the WA Government and the grains industry is clear: we have an opportunity that should be taken to allow farmers to have a choice in which variety they can grow and market, for the benefit of our farmers, our communities, our farmlands and our environment."

“We can move-on with more sustainable and profitable GM varieties that are in demand by key markets. Or, we can ignore reality and swallow mumbo-jumbo from another Greenpeace front.”

The Australian grains industry has long recognised the requirements of all customers. On GM canola, the industry has demonstrated its commitment to delivering choice through the statement entitled ‘Delivering market choice with GM canola’, which was released in 2007 (See www.afa.com.au).

In the statement, major participants in Australia's grain supply chain, including CBH, WA Farmers' and the PGA, committed to introduce GM canola in a manner that:

- Maintains or enhances trade in Australian canola
- Enables market choice along the supply chain
- Is open and transparent
- Provides confidence to all stakeholders, including customers, consumers and governments

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