



Media Release

19 August 2009

GM crops – See through the spin!

A sea of costumes, celebrities and orchestrated campaigns, is crowding out the science and evidence about GM crops, the Grains West Expo 2009 in Perth will hear today.

“GM crops for feed, fibre and food are a reality of Australian life. They have been successfully grown, traded and consumed in Australia and around the world since 1996,” said Ms Paula Fitzgerald, Executive Director, Agrifood Awareness Australia.

“Gene technology is a key plant science tool, helping to deliver better agricultural products and practices – which in turn results in more sustainable food production,” she said.

“Communities, councils, citizens and journalists discussing GM crops and foods need to be aware of the role gene technology plays in our everyday lives.”

“The reality is that GM crops are helping us to manage our biggest food production challenges caused by weeds, pests, disease, drought and climate change,” she said.

“In the future, they will also contribute solutions to some of our growing societal health concerns such as heart disease and diabetes. This will be achieved through GM crop varieties with healthier oil profiles and low GI grains,” she said.

“Gene technology is used to produce insulin to help diabetes sufferers, it provided a vaccine for equine influenza and it may well be the technology that delivers a swine flu vaccine.”

“All gene technology research and resulting products are highly regulated in Australia to ensure human health and environmental safety. While some people may choose to avoid these products, should they prevent others from having a choice?” she asked.

“Those campaigning against GM crops with stunts and costumes conveniently ignore the science. To raise doubts about the safety of approved GM crops, and implicitly question the safety of Australia’s food supply, is simply irresponsible.”

“Australian agriculture is not known for costumes and circuses; rather, farmers and agribusiness use sound science and innovation for safe and efficient feed, fibre and food production.”

“Last year in Western Australia, over 12 million tonnes of grains were handled by CBH, representing around 350,000 separate truckloads. This was delivered into 51 segregations as per customer specifications. This is the basis of grains industry operations and GM crops are just another part of these routine operations,” she said.

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Further information: David Dawson, Cox Inall Communications on 02 8204 385 or 0428 782 266.
(Paula Fitzgerald is speaking at the Grains West Expo 2009 at the Hyatt Hotel in Perth at 2.30pm today, Wednesday 19 August 2009).