



12 November 2009

GM crop debate to move on as harvest begins in Victoria

GM (Genetically Modified) crops are helping farmers around the world manage some of the main challenges of food and fibre production caused by weeds, pests and disease.

Researchers are now using gene technology to help address the additional challenges of drought and climate change as well as provide solutions to some of our growing societal health concerns such as diabetes and heart disease.

The capacity of GM technology to assist agriculture will be the key message delivered by Agrifood Awareness Australia Limited's Executive Director, Paula Fitzgerald at a business breakfast briefing in Melbourne, hosted by the Agribusiness Association of Australia.

"GM varieties of cotton were first commercially grown in Australia in 1996, and now they account for near 90% of the Australian cotton crop.

"In 2008 and 2009 GM canola has been commercially grown in New South Wales and Victoria. In the coming weeks, an estimated 40,000 tonnes of GM canola will be harvested in these states, compared with ABARE's forecast of a 1.7 million national canola crop", Ms Fitzgerald said.

"In just two years, farmers have made the commercial decision to grow GM canola varieties because of the productivity, cost of production and environmental advantages the varieties offer."

Ms Fitzgerald suggests: "It is now time for the debate to move on from the 'false negatives' about gene technology in Australia and examine how we ensure sufficient capacity is provided to R&D organisations to deliver new GM traits that will benefit farmers, the environment, our economy and consumers.

"Having just returned from a GM Wheat Summit in the USA, it is clear that the time has come to focus on new opportunities," Ms Fitzgerald said.

Event Details

Date: Thursday 19 November 2009
Time: 7.00 am for 7.30am start (*formalities will conclude by 9am*)
Where: Langham Hotel, Alto Room, Southbank
Cost: \$60.00 non-members \$55.00 for AAA members
RSVP: Monday 16th November 2009
Bookings: e. agri@agribusiness.asn.au f. (08) 8232 3499 t. (08) 8232 3388

Further Information

Agribusiness Association:

Travis Morgan, Director (Victoria) on 03 9209 2922 or 0428 586 763

Agrifood Awareness Australia Ltd

David Dawson, Cox Inall Communications on 02 8204 3857 or 0428 782 266

The Agribusiness Association of Australia aims to facilitate communication across the agri-food chain and to promote the contribution made by agribusiness to the Australian economy and community. The breakfast meetings are part of a series of forums the Association provides around the nation each year. This event is supported by Agribusiness Association of Australia's national sponsors, Elders & Piper Alderman. Issued on behalf of Agribusiness Association of Australia 93 Frome Road, Adelaide SA 5000