



WAFarmers is the largest and most representative rural lobby group in Western Australia.

With more than 4,000 members, WAFarmers represents the collective opinion of Western Australia's primary producers to help ensure a viable long term local future for agriculture.

Media Release

Monday January 25, 2010

GM TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE GROWERS CHOICE

The Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc.) (WAFarmers) has welcomed today's announcement by Minister for Agriculture and Food, Terry Redman, that an exemption order under the *Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003* has been approved to permit the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) canola.

WAFarmers Director of Policy, Alan Hill, commended the Minister and State Government on their decision which will provide the State's farmers with the choice to use this valuable technology.

"WAFarmers has consistently lobbied State Government over several years for access to GM canola plantings, so it is pleasing to see the Government deliver on this election promise," said Mr Hill.

Studies by Charles Sturt and Melbourne Universities, among others, report that the new GM Canola varieties offer farmers the potential for superior weed control, higher yields and oil quality, environmental benefits and better returns than current conventional varieties.

"Our State's farmers are world leaders in the use of technology to meet the growing food needs of the population."

"To date, WA farmers have had to stand by while growers in the Eastern States and around the world have had the choice to use this technology. Today this changes, and our farmers can continue to meet the needs of a growing population."

Mr Hill noted that GM will not replace traditional varieties of canola but instead will provide some farmers with an additional tool that they can use to manage weeds and pests, with the potential to increase yields and returns.

"Western Australian farmers will now have the choice to cultivate GM canola, non-GM canola or a combination of both."

GM canola varieties available in Australia have been deemed safe for human health and the environment by the Australian Gene Technology Regulator since 2003.

"The industry has proven its ability to use and manage this technology and looks forward on embarking on this positive step for the State's farmers," concluded Mr Hill.

ENDS

For further information contact:

Chris Marris

Marketing and Communications Manager

(08) 9486 2100
0408 099 508