



## Media Release

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### **GM canola decision delivers trifecta – choice, science and sustainability**

Today's decision by the Western Australian Government to allow GM canola production delivers a triple win for the State.

Executive Director of Agrifood Awareness Australia, Paula Fitzgerald said, "Growers will have the choice to use the best tools available; researchers can have certainty about strong, science-based decision-making; and importantly, the community can have confidence in sustainable food production.

"The uptake of GM canola increased four-fold in eastern Australia between the first and second years. This is clear evidence that producers want the opportunity to include these varieties in their farming systems.

"GM canola is not new – it has been grown, traded and consumed around the world for 14 years and has been successfully grown in New South Wales and Victoria since 2008. It is certainly time WA producers had the opportunity to plant these new varieties.

"Since GM canola varieties were first commercialised in 1996, a large amount of scientific analysis and evidence has been collated. GM canola delivers superior weed control, higher yields and oil quality, cost reductions, less herbicide sprays and a reduction in greenhouse gases.

"Australian researchers are actively using gene technology in plant science programs. In addition to gene technology enhancing conventional plant breeding, trials of GM wheat, barley, sugarcane, cotton, bananas and pasture are all underway in Australia.

"Researchers are embracing gene technology in their efforts to tackle food production challenges posed by weeds, pests, environmental and water stresses, and nutrient usage. The technology is also proving to be a valuable tool in the development of foods targeting health concerns such as diabetes and heart disease," she said.

"International dialogue on preparing a path to market for GM wheat is underway. It is great to see that WA will now be part of this sensible and responsible approach with GM wheat commercialisation at least seven years away," she said.

"The Western Australian community can be confident on two fronts – WA producers are embracing the latest sustainable food production tools and the Australian grain industry has the capacity to manage and deliver choice within the supply chain, as has been demonstrated by the 2009 trial.

"Minister Redman must be congratulated for his evidence-based approach to this decision. The Western Australian Government has conducted a very thorough process and drawn on science and evidence to make an informed decision which is welcomed by Australia's food producers and the broader agricultural community," she said.

"We hope that other States, such South Australia where these plant varieties have been banned until 2019, might adopt such an evidence-based approach," she said.

-Ends-

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