



Premier; Minister for Agriculture and Food

25/1/10

Media Statement

GM choice for WA canola growers

The State Government has today announced that genetically modified canola can be grown in Western Australia from this year onwards.

Agriculture and Food Minister Terry Redman has approved an exemption order under the *Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003* to permit the cultivation of GM canola, which will offer growers added choice in their cropping systems.

The Premier, Colin Barnett, said giving farmers access to GM canola fulfilled a key election promise.

“This decision brings WA in line with the other major grain growing states New South Wales and Victoria, where growers have been able to grow GM canola commercially since 2008,” Mr Barnett said.

“WA farmers are some of the best in the world, but they need to have access to new technology like GM canola to remain competitive in the global marketplace.”

Mr Redman said commercial trials in Western Australia last year demonstrated successful cultivation and segregation of GM canola.

“The 17 commercial growers of GM canola throughout the agricultural areas were impressed with the performance of the GM technology package when compared with other varieties of canola,” he said.

More than 1200 tonnes of GM canola were delivered to designated CBH Group receival sites during the trial.

The report on the trials indicated there were 12 minor incidents and all were managed appropriately and segregation from paddock to port was achieved.

Mr Redman said GM canola yields were comparable to non-GM varieties. Growers reported the GM technology allowed efficient weed control and ease of management including the option to dry seed.

Mr Redman said he did not expect GM canola to be suitable for all farming systems but it provided an additional tool for WA growers. Growers would continue to have the choice of growing non-GM varieties.

“Access to modern technology is important for WA agriculture to help growers improve profitability and maintain international competitiveness,” he said.

Major WA grain grower organisations support broader access to GM technology.

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

A detailed report has been produced by the Department of Agriculture and Food on the 2009 GM canola trials, which will be made available to the public. The department will also provide information on growing and segregating GM and non-GM canola.

Access the report and more information on GM canola: www.agric.wa.gov.au/gmcrops

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