

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA TRIALS — GERALDTON AND ESPERANCE

1075. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

- (1) Can the minister detail the objectives of the genetically modified canola trial plots being grown on Department of Agriculture and Food facilities at Geraldton and Esperance?
- (2) Can the minister detail the guidelines and methodologies that have been established to allow meaningful comparison of data that may be obtained from the GM canola trials and the involvement of the Department of Agriculture and Food in their development?
- (3) Will all trial sites be included in such a comparison?
- (4) What processes have been put in place to ensure that the management protocols to which participating farmers were required to sign agreement have been adhered to in practice?
- (5) How many Department of Agriculture and Food staff have been involved in supervision of these statewide trials?
- (6) How many on-farm visits to trial sites have been conducted by department staff?

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1) At Geraldton there are two trials—a systems trial and technology demonstration trial. At Esperance there are three trials—a systems trial, a technology demonstration trial and a national variety trial. The aim of the systems trials is to compare the Roundup Ready, Clearfield and triazine-tolerant canola systems. These trials are taken through to harvest. The aim of the technology demonstration trials is to demonstrate the Roundup Ready technology and the control of volunteer plants. These trials are destroyed before harvest. The aim of the national variety trial is to compare the performance of Roundup Ready, Clearfield and triazine-tolerant canola. These trials are taken through to harvest.
- (2) The systems and technology demonstration trials have been undertaken by the Grain Industry Association, using standard grain industry practices. The national variety trials are carried out in accordance with national variety testing and Australian crop accreditation system requirements and protocols. The department has the role of a monitor and auditor of all trial sites and is the provider of the Esperance and Geraldton trial sites.
- (3) The management of these trials is undertaken by the grain industry. It will report on the trial results according to standard grain industry practices.
- (4) The department has appointed four authorised officers under the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003 to monitor and audit the conduct of the trials and ensure that the trials comply with the conditions of the exemption order.
- (5) Department staff involved in the supervision of the trials include the four authorised officers, a monitoring coordinator, a departmental GM canola trials implementation group and Department of Agriculture and Food research station staff at Esperance and Geraldton.
- (6) There have been 37 official monitoring visits this year. Departmental staff have also made many unofficial visits to trial sites for field days.