

Ms Lauren Mesiti

Committee Clerk

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Parliament House

West Perth. 16/2/2018

Background; For forty years I farmed east of Mt Barker in the south coast region of WA, growing a variety of crops including Canola.

In 2010 the Minister of the day granted an exemption to the Moratorium on growing GM crops in WA, for Canola. This decision resulted in the uptake of GM Canola plantings in my area.

I chose not to plant GM Canola because while not opposed to the technology, I believed at that time I could profitably grow conventional or TT Canola without the additional seed cost and stewardship program associated with the GM crop.

Three of my four neighbours adopted the new GM Canola and planted a number of paddocks adjoining my boundary. Upon maturity these GM canola crops were cut and windrowed prior to harvesting, which is normal practice in this area.

Canola swaths when dry are very susceptible to wind events and it is not unusual to experience crop material moved about by wind from drying swaths.

Such an event happened in Dec 2010 and I found large amounts of GM canola blown over the boundary fence from a neighbouring crop and strewn over my adjoining paddock. As stated, such events are not unusual, but this was the first time GM canola was involved and my own canola crops were all conventional varieties.

I was initially concerned as to the effect this might have on my ability to continue non-GM canola production. However, what I found was, it had absolutely no commercial or other effect on my farming systems and I continued to produce

non-GM canola for the next five years despite subsequent wind events blowing GM canola onto my property.

This is not hard to understand when one considers the farming system in a Mediterranean environment. The GM canola seed that arrived onto my property in December germinated the following autumn following the first rains as does all other plants and was eliminated along with weeds in the normal way when preparing for the next crop. GM canola is no different to any other weed with the exception it cannot be controlled with Glyphosate. There are plenty of other options to control. Even when GM canola was blown onto non-GM unharvested crops the seed pods shatter and the seed falls to the ground and is not recovered in the harvesting process. I continued to deliver non-GM canola without any problems and did not suffer any economic loss.

From my experience, I cannot understand the concern around this issue and don't believe contamination is a reality. On farms vegetative matter and animals regularly get over the fence, it's just a feature of farming. We have developed systems and approaches to deal with it. Even my neighbours growing GM crops also grow non-GM on the same farm. As an industry we have developed systems to identity preserve crops and experience has demonstrated that the industry can segregate and market them.

I cannot envision a situation where so called contamination by GM crop material causes any economic loss in a modern cropping enterprise and respectfully suggest that this enquiry is investigating compensation mechanisms for a situation that does not exist in reality.

Yours faithfully

16/2/2018

Terry Enright