GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA CROPS — CROSS-CONTAMINATION POSSIBILITY

447. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

With reference to the trials of Genetically Modified Canola being grown in Western Australia, I ask:

(a) will the trials be based purely on crop yield;

(b) does the Minister intend to conduct investigations on the level of contamination that takes place in all areas from when the crop is transported from the field to the bins;

(c) does the Minister intend to test and investigate for cross-contamination of Genetically Modified seeds at the storage bins;

(d) what will happen to the seeds from the harvest: will it be used as stock feed, further crop seed or given back to the seed companies;

(e) will the harvest seed be fully segregated at all times and destroyed afterwards; and

(f) can we gain complete assurance that the seed will not make its way into the food chain of Western Australia?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

(a) The aim of the trials is to assess whether the grains industry can effectively segregate GM canola from non-GM canola. Under Australian grains industry standards, non-GM canola must contain less than 0.9 per cent of GM material approved by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator.

(b) Yes. Officers authorised under the GM Crops Free Areas Act 2003 will inspect trial sites regularly and carry out post-trial monitoring (includes testing) in order to assess compliance with the GM Crops Free Areas Act 2003. Testing will be undertaken at the receival site(s). The CBH Better Farm IQ plan also addresses management of the hazards associated with genetically modified grain production in WA.

(c) Yes. The Department of Agriculture and Food will monitor the receival bins for the unintended presence of GM material in other varieties of harvested grains.

(d)-(e) The GM canola grain harvested from the trial sites will be exported. The harvested grain will be managed in a closed- loop system. This requires the harvested GM canola grain to be segregated from other grains throughout the whole supply chain.

(f) All of the GM canola is to be segregated from non-GM grains and exported.