

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA — CONTAMINATION CONCERNS

1497. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

An authorised quarantine inspector within the Department of Agriculture and Food has voiced concerns about the inevitability of contamination of genetically modified (GM) canola on shire roadsides during the transport of the GM canola harvest. 22 shires have declared themselves to be GM-free for crop cultivation and 21 GM-Free for transport and storage of GM products. I ask the Minister:

- (a) are you being undermined by people within your own department;
- (b) what safeguards are in place to address the issue of spillage of GM canola seeds along shire verges;
- (c) what is the long term plan to address the germination of herbicide resistant GM canola seeds on shire roadside verges;
- (d) will the Department of Agriculture and Food provide practical and financial assistance to shires for the testing of GM canola that is a result of roadside spills; and
- (e) will the Department of Agriculture and Food provide practical and financial assistance to shires for the management of GM canola that germinates as a result of roadside spills?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (a) No.
- (b) Any vehicle delivering GM canola in 2009 is required to abide by CBH's code of practice which is designed to remove any cross contamination or spillage. The Department's Authorised Officers will be visiting all GM canola growers prior to harvest to ensure they can apply the code of practice in preventing GM canola spillage onto roadside verges.
- (c) Plans to address the germination and control of herbicide resistant GM canola on roadside verges remain the responsibility of individual shires. The Department has a minor use permit for a range of low cost herbicides that can be added to glyphosate to remove herbicide resistant GM canola on roadside verges should such removal be required.
- (d)-(e) The Department will not provide financial assistance for testing the potential presence of GM canola that is the result of roadside spills or management of any such spill. They are prepared to work with shires on identifying the options available for testing and management of GM canola that could be present as a result of roadside spills.