

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED PLANTS

3. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Are genetically engineered plants being grown in open field trials on agricultural research stations and/or other Agriculture Western Australia properties?
- (2) If so, on which properties is the research being undertaken?
- (3) What crops are being grown?
- (4) On whose behalf are the crops being grown?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) At this stage of the agricultural season it is anticipated that only two groups of plantings involving genetically modified organisms - as defined in the Gene Technology Act 2000 - will be conducted on Agriculture Western Australia research stations in 2001.
- (2) In each case the plantings will be carried out at the Frank Wise Institute in Kununurra. All plantings are being conducted under licence and are subject to conditions issued by the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee.
- (3) The crops being grown are cotton and poppy. In the case of the cotton plantings, some have already occurred and are part of a more extensive evaluation of that variety being conducted on a number of properties on the Ord River. The cotton variety being grown on the Ord River has already been approved for commercial release and is widely grown in eastern Australia. I imagine it is the same variety that is being grown under trial in the west Kimberley. Trials of the poppy plantings have not yet commenced. The plantings are on a smaller scale than the cotton plantings and, as far as we are aware in Western Australia, the plantings of genetically modified poppy are confined to the Frank Wise Institute.
- (4) Currently, the protocols under which the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee manages the field testing of genetically modified organisms preclude the identification of company details for specific sites. It is appropriate to add that, in addition to these two plantings of GMOs on AgWest property in 2001, Agwest will monitor, in compliance with GMAC conditions, a small number of sites on a number of other research stations on which small GMO trials were conducted in previous years. I cannot provide the member with the clarity the question truly demands until such time as the Gene Technology Act has been enacted in Western Australia. There is no compulsion for anybody to divulge where GMO organisms are currently being planted.