

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS, CONTAMINATION

62. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Agriculture

In relation to the Minister's announcement of a cautious introduction of genetically modified crops -

- (1) By what approach does the Minister intend to ensure that non-GMO crops are not contaminated with nearby introduced GMO crop pollen?
- (2) What is the formulae by which the Minister will determine if a net economic benefit to the State will occur through the introduction of GMO crops?
- (3) Does the Government intend to provide compensation to producers whose crops are contaminated with GMO products and/or markets are lost through GMO contamination?
- (4) Who will be responsible for paying the cost of testing crops or produce for GMO contamination?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

- (1) The issue of out-crossing potential between genetically modified (GM) and non-GM crops is a fundamental component of the Gene Technology Regulator (GTR) process of assessing risk. Proponents of potential GM crop releases are required to furnish the GTR with scientific data in this area to enable the regulator to consider environmental acceptability on a case-by-case basis.
- (2) With respect to canola, I have asked the GM Canola Technical Working Group (GMCTWG) to prepare a comprehensive public review paper on the commercial release of GM canola in WA. There will be a number of aspects to this paper such as regulation, benefits and risks, pollen flow to non-GM crops, market expectations, identity preservation and issues associated with trade. This report and other published information and submissions from interested parties will form the basis of the Government's considerations in this area.  
  
Other crops will be treated on a similar basis.
- (3) No. The Gene Technology Act 2000 details the Federal-State Government agreements that such issues will be dealt with under common law provisions.
- (4) In respect of canola, the GMCTWG public report will review market expectations for thresholds of a mixture of GM canola in non-GM crops. It is likely that a Quality Assurance process will be developed, which will include testing for compliance with market standards. It is premature to speculate on who should pay until there is greater clarity on the likely activities and costs.