

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS — FARMERS REGISTER

2495. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

- (1) Will the Minister establish a register of farmers of Genetically Modified (GM) food?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is no, why not?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is yes, when will this happen?
- (4) Who will be the scrutineer responsible to address contamination issues in the future?
- (5) How will the Minister address issues relating to injunctions and litigation against GM farms by GM-free farms.
- (6) What plan of action will the Minister put in place to ensure that when a GM-free farm is contaminated, the GM-free farmer is not laden with exorbitant legal expenses?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (1) No
- (2) Research conducted by Australian and International bodies, and regulatory oversight from the Federal and State Government, has shown that the commercial cultivation of Roundup Ready canola poses no threat to human and animal health, the natural environment or Western Australia's market interests. In light of this the Government does not believe a register of GM canola growers is in the public interest. There are also concerns over privacy in such a register.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The WA grains industry is responsible for ensuring the segregation of GM canola. The Department of Agriculture and Food will carry out random audits of farmers using GM canola technology this year to demonstrate the effectiveness of the stewardship protocols in place and that growers are complying with crop management plan requirements. The outcomes will be reported to the WA Parliament.
- (5) Neighbourliness, common sense and common law will be the means of managing such a situation should it arise.
- (6) The Government has confidence in the WA grains industry's ability to segregate GM canola to meet the specified threshold levels. In the unlikely event that such an incident should occur the 2005/06 review of the Commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000 concluded that common law allows for effective remedies for persons incurring damage from GM crops.