

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA — CONTAMINATION TO ORGANIC CROPS

4682. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

I refer to the contamination of Mr Steve Marsh's Kojonup organic farm with genetically modified (GM) canola, and I ask:

- (a) will the Government accept any responsibility for this contamination issue;
- (b) has the Minister's office had any communication with representatives from Monsanto regarding the contamination to Mr Marsh's farm;
- (c) has the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) had any communication with representatives from Monsanto regarding the contamination to Mr Marsh's farm; and
- (d) if yes to (b) and/or (c), will the Minister advise in what form this communication was and what the content was?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (a) No
- (b)-(c) Yes
- (d) A representative of Monsanto telephoned the Minister's office and informed a policy advisor of Monsanto's position on the issue. Following the recent crop updates forum in Perth the Minister met representatives of Monsanto to discuss the information they presented at the forum and the Kojonup issue was mentioned briefly, with Monsanto advising they would not be providing financial support to any legal action and they understood no legal action had been taken to date. The Minister informed Monsanto the Department of Agriculture and Food was offering technical advice to Mr Marsh but the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia had made their re-certification requirements confidential, which meant the department was unable to assist at this time.

The Department of Agriculture and Food made telephone calls to inform Monsanto that officers of the Department were going to visit Mr Marsh's property and take samples of plant material for analysis, and to clarify the content of Monsanto representatives' media statements.