

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS — SEEDS AND WEEDS TESTING

4161. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

As harvest time approaches, contamination avoidance and spillage during harvest and transport are a concern, as is the process for the inevitable cleanup. I ask:

- (a) have the shires received training on how to test for patented Genetically Modified (GM) seeds and GM weeds and how to treat them;
- (b) have the shires been informed where the GM canola silos are and the transport routes to ports;
- (c) have the shires been informed of the Co-Operative Bulk Handling (CBH) Group receiver points for GM canola and consequent transport routes from farms; and
- (d) do the shires know if any of the GM crops in the shire are being used for livestock feed, and what traceability and monitoring is in place for the GM feed and the GM-fed animals?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

Department of Agriculture and Food

- (a) No. The Department of Agriculture and Food fact sheet "GM crops and local government" provides specific advice on the control of roadside volunteer canola, both GM and non-GM. This fact sheet is available on the Department's website and to draw the fact sheet to the attention of Local Government the July 2009 WALGA Eco-News publication included an article on the factsheet.
- (b) During harvest GM canola may be stored in silos on grower properties or in silos at CBH receival points. The identity of the GM canola growers is not publicly available so Shire Councils may not be aware of locations of silos of GM canola on grower properties. Cooperative Bulk Handling have published the 2010-11 GM canola receival sites on the CBH website and so Shire Councils have the opportunity to find out about location of CBH silos and thereby infer transport routes of GM canola from CBH silos to ports.
- (c) Answered in (b).
- (d) Shire Councils may have local knowledge of whether GM canola crops are being used for livestock feed. There are traceability requirements for GM canola hay as GM canola growers must advise Monsanto if their crop is not harvested for grain using the "Roundup Ready canola not taken to harvest" form. The growers must also advise if the crop was cut for hay / silage, whether the hay was sold or used on farm. If the hay was sold the grower must confirm an appropriate declaration has been provided to the purchaser. In 2000, Food Standards Australia New Zealand concluded Roundup Ready canola was as safe as conventional canola and so there are no specific traceability requirements for GM canola fed animals.