

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA — CONTAMINATION TO ORGANIC CROPS

4683. 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) did the Minister have a spokesperson to handle his media commitments in the Agriculture and Food portfolio while he was on holiday; and
  - (i) if not, why not;
  - (ii) if yes, who was the spokesperson; and
  - (iii) if yes, why were there no comments from the spokesperson on this issue;
- (b) does the Minister now have a detailed strategy in place to audit other non-GM and organic farms for GM canola contamination;
- (c) does the Minister have a detailed report as to why the buffer zones did not work in the Marsh case; and
- (d) given the confirmation of contamination, does the Minister now concede that all the checks and balances were not ticked off in order to have GM canola trials in Western Australia?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (a) Yes
  - (i) Not applicable
  - (ii) Hon. C.C. Porter was appointed Acting Minister for Agriculture and Food.
  - (iii) Minister Redman commented on the issue before going on leave and there was no need for Acting Minister Porter to comment further.
- (b) No. This is not necessary.
- (c) The buffer zones are in place to ensure effective segregation of non GM canola grain and GM canola grain. The Stephen Marsh case is not a case of loss of effective segregation but is a case of loss of certification due to the presence of GM material on Mr Marsh's property.
- (d) The Stephen Marsh case is not a case of contamination of organic produce but one on unwanted presence of plant material on a portion of his property. The results of the 2009 GM canola trials program showed the WA grains industry could effectively segregate non GM canola from GM canola. CBH Group has confirmed there has been effective segregation of non GM canola from GM canola this season.