

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA, NON-CONTAMINATED CERTIFIED SEED

20. Hon JIM SCOTT to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

- (1) Is the minister aware of the proposals for up to 5 000 hectare trials of genetically modified canola in Victoria and New South Wales?
- (2) Given that almost all certified non-GM canola seed used in Western Australia comes from those States, can the minister explain what steps he will take to ensure access to non-contaminated certified canola seed for Western Australian farmers?
- (3) Does the minister consider that Western Australia is now well placed to become a supplier and exporter of non-GM canola and other certified seeds while we remain the only State free from genetic pollution from GM crops?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes, I am aware of the proposal to New South Wales but I do not believe a formal proposal has yet been presented to Victoria. No decision has been made by New South Wales with the New South Wales advisory council having 28 days from 1 March to advise the minister whether it supports the trials. There is no certainty about the trials in either State.
- (2) As there has been no commercial GM canola grown in Australia, Western Australian farmers can still access non-GM canola seed. The so-called co-existence trials in the eastern States will have conditions applied to prevent adventitious contamination of non-GM supply chains. The Western Australian Government, and, I am sure, farmers and the wider community, will be keenly interested in the effectiveness of these conditions if the trials are approved in New South Wales and/or Victoria.
- (3) As members are aware, there is a moratorium on the growing of GM food crops in Western Australia until May 2006. I am currently considering responses to the Government's public consultation on the form of the ministerial order under the Genetically Modified Crops Free Areas Act 2003 to give effect to the moratorium. The industry will be well positioned to extract any marketing benefits that may arise as a result of the moratorium. I expect that I will be making public my decision on the nature of the order under the Act by the end of this month.