

GENETICALLY MODIFIED CANOLA CROPS — VICTORIAN COMPARISON

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

- (1) Is the Minister aware in Victoria recently, it was found that Genetically Modified canola crops have performed no better than their non-Genetically Modified counterparts?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that the results from Grains Research and Development Council showed the yields, from the first independent trial crops in Horsham and Forbes in Victoria, were 0.7 tonne per hectare for Genetically Modified and 0.8t/ha ha for non-Genetically Modified crops?
- (3) Can we be assured by the Minister that if similar findings are achieved from the trials in this State that they will be abandoned as a failure?
- (4) Are there plans in place to extend these trials until they eventually provide evidence to support the use of Genetically Modified canola seed?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (1) I am aware of the results and the conclusions of the 2008 National Variety Trials on Roundup Ready canola carried out in Victoria and New South Wales.
- (2) Yes. It was concluded that there was no significant difference between the performance of the GM and conventional canola. A difficult season meant the yields for all varieties of canola were low. However, yield is only part of the equation in regard to sustainability and productivity of a canola crop. Reduced use of herbicides and effective weed management are other important factors.
- (3) The aim of the 2009 limited commercial-size Roundup Ready canola trials in Western Australia is to assess whether the grains industry can effectively segregate Roundup Ready canola from non-GM canola throughout the supply chain. The Department of Agriculture and Food will provide a report on the trial outcomes. I will consider the future direction for the State in the light of this report, the outcome from the review of the GM Crops Free Areas Act 2003 and other related information.
- (4) No