

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CROPS, PROTOCOL

**485. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Leader of the House:**

- (1) Will a protocol be developed prior to the introduction of commercial genetically engineered crops in Western Australia to establish responsibility for -
  - (a) the cost of testing and segregation of GE crops; and
  - (b) the liability for the loss of markets which occurs due to contamination of grain by GE material?
- (2) Have studies been conducted or will studies be conducted to determine the additional production costs incurred through the regulatory monitoring segregation, liability and any other costs imposed by growing GE crops and animals in Western Australia?
- (3) If so, what would be the estimated additional costs to consumers?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The issues referred to in the question are being addressed. They are the subject of studies and discussion papers within Western Australia and nationally. It is my position that the necessary protocols will be developed prior to commercial release of any genetically modified crops. It is also my position that any costs involved in identification, preservation and segregation will be borne by the farmers of GM crops and not by all farmers. The release of commercial GM crops is not expected for two years at the very minimum - if that occurs at all. When the first commercial crops are introduced, the issues referred to in Hon Jim Scott's question will be manageable simply by virtue of the fact that the quantity of GM crops will be small compared with non-GM crops.
- (2) These studies are being conducted and will continue for some time. As the regulatory system has recently come into operation, the costs of regulation and monitoring are now being examined. The cost of the segregation of crops is the subject of a separate study by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.
- (3) The additional costs or savings to consumers cannot be estimated at this stage. The cost of growing GM crops will be weighed against the benefits and cost savings by farmers, who, in due course, will make their own choice. Clearly if these crops are not cost effective they will not be taken up.