

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD CROPS, HEALTH STUDIES AND TESTING

**169. Hon JIM SCOTT to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:**

Will the Minister for Health inform the House -

- (1) What type of health studies and testing have been carried out by Food Standards Australia New Zealand on the genetically modified herbicide-tolerant canola that has been approved for commercial release by the Gene Technology Regulator?
- (2) Has Food Standards Australia New Zealand carried out health testing of any other genetically modified food crops; and, if so, what type of tests have been carried out?
- (3) Does the Department of Health approve the sale for consumption of genetically modified crops and food in Western Australia that have not been comprehensively tested for food safety?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The approach adopted by Food Standards Australia New Zealand in the assessment of genetically modified foods for human consumption is based on a comprehensive and detailed scientific analysis of all available credible data, using a conservative approach that takes into account sensitive populations. This assessment includes -
  - (a) the examination of the altered DNA and the new gene products to demonstrate the potential reactions to toxins, allergens and nutrition;
  - (b) animal feeding studies used to assess genetically modified canola that were undertaken using canola mash. Three studies using canola meal have been conducted, and all support the conclusion that there is no human health and safety concern in the consumption of GM canola oil;
  - (c) the determination of substantial equivalence as a comparative methodology against conventional foods to assess the safety of GM foods and identify hazards. This is a widely supported approach that has the endorsement of peak international scientific bodies.
- (2) There is a requirement that feeding trials be conducted for each and every application submitted for approval by FSANZ and that the raw data be provided to FSANZ along with the other data mentioned previously. These studies may be conducted internationally or in Australia, and form part of the submission by industry for approval of the GM product to be used for human consumption.
- (3) No.