

GENETICALLY MODIFIED WHEAT CROPS — MERREDIN

5858. Mr M.P. Murray to the Agriculture and Food

In relation to the genetically modified (GM) wheat trials being conducted on a property in the Wheatbelt town of Merredin, I ask:

- (a) can the Premier explain the benefit the Western Australian taxpayers will get from the \$9 million expenditure on GM;
- (b) what scientific value does the Premier expect the agricultural industry in this State will get out of the trial;
- (c) has the Federal Government provided any funding for this trial; and
 - (i) if yes, how much was provided; and
- (d) who will be the vendor of any intellectual property resulting from these trials?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (a) The \$9 million investment in the New Genes for New Environments facilities will establish genetically modified (GM) crop trial facilities at two key wheat belt locations in Western Australia. The facilities will be used to evaluate the in-field performance of new GM traits to determine their suitability for Western Australian growers. The facilities will enable the evaluation of new genetic traits with the potential to:
 - Maintain or increase production under higher temperatures and drought stress.
 - Increase grain quality and nutritional value to consumers.
 - Increase fertiliser use efficiency.
 - Improve tolerance to fungal diseases that cause the industry significant losses or require expensive fungicide applications.
- (b) As a result of this evaluation the Western Australian agricultural industry will acquire knowledge of performance of GM traits in Western Australian field conditions.
- (c) Yes
 - (i) The funding is provided by the CSIRO and it is more appropriate for the CSIRO to provide that information.
- (d) The trial is to evaluate existing varieties. There will be no new intellectual property resulting from the trial.