

## **Media Information**

**Release:** Immediate

**Date:** 19 September 2005

### **Economic Modelling makes the case for GM Crop Commercialisation**

AusBiotech, Australia's Biotechnology Organisation, today called on Australian food and feed crop producers and marketers to work with industry to convince state governments that GM moratoria were not in the national economic interest.

This call follows the publication of a modelling study in the ABARE journal, *Australian Commodities*, that found Australia's GM-free stance on canola would result in significant losses for Australian farmers.

The article, *Transgenic crops: welfare implications for Australia*, found that failure to commercialise GM canola and other GM crops such as barley, wheat and maize had the potential to cost Australians \$3 billion.

AusBiotech CEO, Dr Anna Lavelle said that this article was a good example of evidence-based argument that could be used to make the case for lifting the various state moratoria on GM canola.

"This article also reveals that there is currently no financial benefit to producing non-GM vs GM canola, with Canadian producers of GM canola maintaining their market share of the Chinese market (68%) where Australia's non-GM canola has a 24% share," Dr Lavelle said.

"The Canadians also have the added benefit of lower production costs for their GM crop as a result of having lower costs in their weed suppression regimes."

Dr Lavelle said that this economic modelling together with regulatory approval from the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator now showed that GM canola was safe for human use, safe for the environment and good for the economy.

Dr Ian Edwards, Chairman of AusBiotech's AgBio Advisory Committee said the article also highlighted the benefits that the introduction of GM cotton has brought to Australian producers.

“There has been a high adoption of this new technology among Australian producers with more than 70% of cotton planted in Australia in 2004-05 being GM,” he said.

“The ABARE article outlines the measurable economic, environmental and health benefits following the introduction of the first GM cotton variety 10 years ago.”

Dr Edwards said the strength of Australian producers’ support for this new technology and their lobbying efforts were pivotal in gaining approval for the introduction GM cotton in Australia.

“I would urge Australian food and feed grain producers to follow their colleagues’ lead and use the sort of evidence-based information outlined in the ABARE study to take the case for allowing the commercialisation of canola and other grain crops to the state governments,” Dr Edwards said.

“Industry, producers and marketers have to work together to show the state governments that Australian farmers do not want to continue to miss out on the economic, environmental and health benefits this technology will bring now and in the future,” he said.

**For further information please contact:**

|                 |                  |                 |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Dr Anna Lavelle | CEO, Austbiotech | +61 3 9208 4203 |
| Dr Ian Edwards  | Chair AgBio AG   | +61 8 9450 4804 |