

Media Release



27 November 2007

AusBiotech applauds NSW GM crops decision

Today's announcement by New South Wales Primary Industries Minister Ian MacDonald that Genetically Modified (GM) canola may now be cultivated in New South Wales has been welcomed by AusBiotech.

"The moratorium in NSW was surprising, considering GM cotton has been used in NSW since 1996" said Dr Anna Lavelle, CEO of AusBiotech "Although the NSW Act targeted canola as a food crop, GM cottonseed oil is also readily consumed in Australia".

"Australian Federal regulators are very thorough when considering GM crops, examining both human and environmental health and safety, for use as food" she explained "Marketing considerations for GM crops should be left to the industry and not regulated at the State level".

"NSW cotton farmers have had access to GM crops for the past 10 years, reducing insecticide use by up to 75%, benefiting both the growers and the environment" said Dr Lavelle.

Although the number of GM canola trials in NSW fell during the last four years, cotton farmers have consistently planted up to 95% of the crop to GM varieties.

"The adoption of GM crops in both developing and developed countries continues to increase" said Dr Ian Edwards, Chair of the AusBiotech Agricultural Advisory Committee

Media Release



“However, we don’t expect that groups opposed to GM crops will be happy with the decision to give NSW canola growers the same choice as NSW cotton growers”.

“Both NSW cotton farmers and more importantly Canadian canola farmers have been using GM crops since 1996, now NSW canola farmers can access the same technology” said Dr Lavelle.

“NSW cotton farmers have benefited from the technology for 10 years, we applaud the decision that allows NSW farmers to access and evaluate GM canola” she concluded.

Further information:

Dr Anna Lavelle
CEO, AusBiotech
0419 516 620

Scott Carpenter
Program Manager, AusBiotech
0418 573 448
scarpenter@ausbiotech.org