

## **Media Information**

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### **Liability Report addresses grower concerns – it's now time to move on**

AusBiotech, Australia's Biotechnology Industry Organisation, today urged growers and marketers to throw their support behind GM Crop technology following the release of a report that found current legal, farming and commercial systems can adequately deal with issues that may arise from the use of the technology.

The report by ACIL Tasman and commissioned by Avcare, analysed the means by which GM crops could be managed in the current Australian environment including segregation and liability issues.

The report – *Managing genetically modified crops in Australia* – confirmed that there is no need to introduce strict liability laws or further legislate to deal with liability issues. It also found that current segregation practices were sufficient to also deal with GM crops.

Commenting on the report, AusBiotech CEO Dr Anna Lavelle said that the ACIL Tasman/Avcare report was a welcome addition to the wealth of information already available supporting the efficacy of well entrenched systems to manage GM crops in the Australian environment.

"Many of the issues, such as strict liability, were dealt with in great detail and transparently in the drafting and public consultation phases of the Gene Technology Act's development in 1999 and 2000," Dr Lavelle said.

"Nothing that has occurred since then would indicate there is any need to make any changes to a system that is already working well," she said.

Chairman of AusBiotech's AgBio Advisory Committee, Professor Ian Edwards, said that the ACIL Tasman/Avcare report should provide grower and marketer groups with the information and comfort they need to move forward with this technology.

"Given that some of the major perceived risks have now been substantively addressed and set aside, farmers and farming groups should now engage constructively with industry to pressure State Governments to make this technology more widely available," Professor Edwards said.

"The recent ABARE 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, so neither the agriculture industry or the Australian economy can afford to wait any longer to exploit this technology.

"This report should act as a further catalyst for change," Professor Edwards said.

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