MLC Kim Chance misleads WA Agriculture through Hansard on 10-11th May 2006

Day	Comment by "Hon" Chance	Reality – as seen by Bill Crabtree
A 10th May	Canadians enjoyed a price premium advantage over Australia for canola sold in Japan. The price premium has reversed.	Not true. In 1998 the main WA grown variety "Karoo" that had 20-25% lower oil (36%) and was high in ureic acid. This gave us less return than Canadian canola. Now we have a drought in Australia and Canada has had bumper-record GM canola crops in the last two years – this is called in market terms "basis". ABARE authority, Max Foster, on GM canola markets (google it) states there is no price difference with GM Canadian canola against ours, in the last 10 years. The current 15% difference is due primarily to basis.
B 10th May	The answer was that it [*gross margins for Canadian farmers canola crops*] was pretty much line-ball with conventional practices.	Canadian farmers and scientists, in one voice, applaud GM canola for more profit. It has increased every year in Canada since being available in 1995. GM canola is now 85% of their crop – are they foolish to do this?
C 10th May	We should bear in mind that Canada does not have the advantage that Australia has in the use of triazine-tolerant canola varieties; that is, our standard variety is [the] triazine tolerant [lines]	Canadian researcher Dr Gerhard Rakow bred atriazine tolerant canola, but discarded it in 1988 as it yielded 20-30% less than other varieties. We use it, in Australia, as we need herbicide tolerance - we must have weed control. If we had a choice, like Canadians with GM canola, then we too would abandon TTs. See "A decade of herbicide-resistant crops in Canada." Beckie, H. J., Harker, K. N., Hall, L. M., Warwick, S. I., Légère, A., Sikkema, P. H., Clayton, G.W., Thomas, A. G., Leeson, J. Y., Séguin-Swartz, G. and Simard, M.J. 2005. Can. J. Plant Sci. **85**:
D 10th May	Therefore, Canada has big weed problems	Canada has minimal weed problems – see Dr Neil Harkers papers on impact of GM crops. We are the world leaders with herbicide resistance! Ten years ago the Canadians were. We had pastures and sheep, they did not and they crop almost every acre, every year. See 2006 WANTFA conference paper by Canadian Agronomist Scott Day.
E 10th May	our herbicide resistance is fundamentally to the herbicide Glyphosate.	Not true. Our herbicide resistance is fundamentally to most herbicides other than glyphosate. See scientific paper [2006 – in press] by UWA researchers at WAHRI which shows 0.6% of 450 random WA wheat-belt ryegrass samples with "developing resistance" only to glyphosate. With 99.4% being susceptible. See UWA scientific paper 2006 (in press): "Extreme levels of evolved herbicide resistance in annual ryegrass *(Lolium rigidum)* within the Western Australian wheat belt." M. Owen, M. Walsh, R.S. Llewellyn and S.B. Powles.
F 10th May	Guess what is the only herbicide-tolerant variety of canola that is available for commercial use? It is Glyphosate	This is not true and the sad thing is that Mr Chance knows it not to be true. I have spoken to Mr Chance, even with Prof AD Robson once, and perhaps 4 times on the "other GM herbicide available" in canola - called glufosinate ammonia (Basta or Liberty) canola. This Liberty canola is GM canola and will give a unique mode of herbicide activity. A powerful tool against herbicide resistance.
G 10th May	In other words, the chemical that we would be forced to rely more on as a result of adopting this technology is the one chemical with which we have a major herbicide resistance problem	Not true – the opposite is true. There is one population of ryegrass (at Mullewa) that is glyphosate (Roundup) resistant (see Ag Dept Dr Abul Hashem). We have major problems with most other herbicides, glyphosate is our least herbicide resistant problem. But, yes, if not used in rotation it could become a problem in WA.
H	I have seen rye-grass at the University of Western Australia	Yes, this is how herbicide resistance works – but this is in the one Mullewa population. This comment could be seen

10th May	being sprayed with the equivalent of 2 L/ha of Glyphosate - double the recommended rate - in its two-leaf stage, which is a very sensitive stage. It chewed up the Glyphosate and grew very strongly. It was as though it had been fertilised	as scaremongering.
I 10th May	It is not a smart move to become increasingly more mono-cultural - it is what happens when we adopt a technology that locks us into one chemical - when that chemical is already causing a problem	Every canola paddock, every year, is now sprayed with Roundup – this is not a good approach and it needs changing. Adoption of GM canola would offer Liberty and increase diversity and reduce the likelihood of glyphosate resistance. Google Ag Dept 2004 Crop Updates paper by W.L. Crabtree "Weed control opportunities with GM canola"
J 10th May	Very little of the agricultural production in the Americas generally is exported outside the Americas	The EU commission press release on 7th Feb 2006 says "The EU is one of the largest importers of GMOs….. The EU is the largest soybean and soy meal importer and the fact is that soy imports consist largely of Monsanto "Round-Up Ready" [GM] soybean, which is cultivated in all the main soybean global producers, i.e. the US, Brazil and Argentina."
K 10th May	If anybody wanted to see a success story about GM technology. It is amazing what that technology has done in Argentina. It has revolutionised agriculture and has turned around the economy of the whole country. It has been, by anyone's judgment, a mind-blowing success.	This one is true! It would be the same in WA. I have been to Argentina too and have traveled with agricultural experts on two occasions. The uptake of the technology has been staggering – it works there! For WA it will put $60,000 into each farmers income per year. We are currently losing $170 million per year in WA since we first had the opportunity to grow the crop in 2003. This is a loss of $680 million so far – see www.no-till.com.au
L 10th May	The situation in the South American countries [*marketing their GM crops*] that I have mentioned is the reverse. They need to worry only about 10 per cent of their grain being exported outside their continent.	The EU annually imports 40 Mt of soy from the Americas. This is mostly GM. 98% of Argentina soy is GM, 60% of Brazil soy is GM and 89% of USA soy is GM. Over the last 10 years, 10% of our canola, goes to the EU. For this we gain a $10/t advantage (with oil premiums) – but the other 90% is sold without this $10/t – so effectively we make $1/t - see CBH staff of Max Foster (ABARE). Also, in 2007 the EU will import GM canola from Canada.
M 10th May	It [*ease of marketing*] certainly starts to explain why GM technology, which has been so readily picked up and exploited in the Americas, both north and south, has been regarded so doubtfully in Australia.	90% of our canola markets accept GM with no premiums, we sell to the same markets as Canada. When farmers are given the choice they chose GM technology. A North American acquaintance told me recently "forget the US farm bill, GM crops have been the biggest leg-up that the US farmers have ever had."
N 10th May	In an issue on which we so importantly need to understand the facts, we cannot afford to cloud the issue with emotion	Chance's comments here, in Hansard, and repeated in the media frustrates informed scientists. Statements like "we might grow a tail if we eat GM crops – 2 May 2005", are considered globally by scientists as scaremongering, anti-scientific and emotional.
O 10th May	pro-GM activists seem ready to ignore the scientific concerns that are expressed by the anti-GM activists	Those who are pro-GM are usually respected and experienced scientists who have carefully studied the abundant data set as their trade teaches them to do. Such concerns have been researched by Europe's most eminent scientists in a $US64 Million study to be without foundation (Report from EU 2001). This report, and others, conclude that "GM crops are as safe, if not safer than conventionally bred crops".
P	There is no commercial species to apply the moratoria to [*in WA*].	GM canola species is applicable – the moratoria is halting its use!

Q 10th May	Therefore, for that reason alone - there may be a dozen other reasons - we will never see GM technology adopted in this country	We have been growing GMs in "this country" (Australia) for over 10 years – cotton and now carnations. We have 53 Therapeutic goods that are GMd and used daily by thousands of WA people (see OGTR website)
R 11th May	there is no such thing as high-yielding canola at this stage	In 2003 Pacific Seeds were ready to release the high yielding hybrid Hyola 60 with glyphosate tolerance (GM). It gave 25% higher yields and could still be being grown 4 seasons later. Independent data (M Lamond) at the 2004 Crop Updates, Dept of Agric, showed a 20% yield increase from GM Liberty canola over current TT canolas. Also, see table at the end of this article where our TTs give 20% less yield than the controls giving 100% – the standard.
S 11th May	There are not too many parts of Western Australia in which canola is grown reliably. It is far more likely that oilseeds for biofuel will come from the likes of cranberries and mustards, which grow east of the dry end of the canola zone.	Canola could be grown reliably in all parts of the state if GM canola were permitted, even in the driest regions. GM canola will make growing it a safer and reliable proposition. Mustard and cranberries do not yield like GM hybrid canolas – no reality supports this loose statement. Canadians can grow all these but use GM canola as the biodiesel crop (see Canadian Canola Council website).
T 11th May	This includes the development of conventionally bred higher oilseed yielding varieties with broader adaptation to a range of environments and the development of a wider range of annual crop species, such as mustard, camellina and linola, suited to current cropping systems	Not true. When Dianne Wreford, Assistant Vice-President, Public Affairs, Canola Council of Canada, (phone 204 982-2108) read this from Chance she said, about my response refuting him; "I couldn't believe my eyes when I read Kim Chance's answer. Also the EU use rapeseed/canola as their virtually exclusive biodiesel feedstock!"

The grain yield table below is from the Department of Agriculture, Manitoba, Canada in their 2005 canola trial results. The conventional variety is a high yielding line of canola and would be 20-30% higher yielding than TT canola. The Liberty Link (GM) canola averaged 30-31% more than this conventional line, and in a fully resourced mature breeding program in Australia, these same yield increases are probable. Making 40-50% yield increases likely for us to switch from TT canola to RR or LL hybrids that are GM.

*(continued)*PRAIRIE CANOLA VARIETY TEST - MID SEASON ZONE

		Test 2 - 2005 Yield by Test Location - % of 46A65												
Variety	2005 Average Yields	ABERDEEN, SK	CAMROSE, AB	CANORA, SK	DAUPHIN, MB	FORT SASKATCHEWAN, AB	KELVINGTON, SK	LAKE LENORE, SK	LASHBURN, SK	MELFORT, SK	NORTH BATTLEFORD, SK	TROCHU, AB	WATROUS, SK	YORKTON, SK
Conventional														
46A65	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Clearfield														
292CL	101	98	84	107	97	113	87	100	103	101	116	100	99	110
46H70	103	106	89	110	102	117	94	96	105	96	122	100	99	106
Manor	104	108	91	115	95	114	101	98	94	94	116	111	104	116
SP Deliver CL	89	92	88	80	90	113	59	83	82	99	93	90	89	101
Liberty Link														
5030	131	133	103	144	125	136	126	108	140	142	154	135	122	136
5070	130	116	106	148	122	141	131	114	132	141	144	139	131	118
Roundup														
1818	107	94	102	106	103	107	101	103	92	120	119	111	109	120
1841	114	110	101	123	131	119	96	113	103	119	126	107	118	117
46H23	101	93	98	92	109	119	99	99	87	100	114	110	95	101
624RR	102	102	87	115	100	119	88	99	99	100	109	103	96	108
71-45 RR	110	108	104	103	95	116	95	100	103	122	124	131	111	113
821RR	102	107	99	110	96	109	68	98	91	117	116	111	107	100