

Summary of comments from meeting with MLC Kim Chance - 29th June 2005
with Bill Crabtree, Leon Bradley and John Snooke at Chance's office

- Minister requested scientific study references that are published in referred journals on large animals that have been fed GM food over the long-term. Bill to search.
- Minister said that not enough time has passed with GMs to know for sure if they are safe yet - citing asbestos example with scientists not thinking it a problem at the time.
- Minister is concerned with segregation capacity with GMs. Bill asserted that this was readily doable at the 0.9% level - the EU standard accepted - but not at the 0.000% level.
- Minister suggested that legal liability issues have not been worked through yet. Bill said this is not an issue in Canada and would not be a problem here in WA. Minister said times were now different.
- Minister accepted the possibility that we could be left behind and that he would be keen to see pharmaceutical agricultural crops. Bill said this is not the issue here and now. Leon said we are already several years behind and we will be playing catch-up. Bill said that in 2005 that 80 new lines of GM crops were released in Canada (ED - this could be North America - not sure!).
- Bill remarked on display in the front office boasting about WA being non-GM and that the canola has been created through mutagenesis - 'a thousand times worse than GM'.
- Minister understood the link between treflan, stubble burning, ryegrass, herbicide resistance and the potential of GM herbicide tolerant canola for these issues. Minister had good understanding of resistance issues. Bill mentioned how Brian Harvey (Canadian farmer - NW Manitoba) had wild oats, green foxtail barley and kochia resistance which nearly beat him 10 years ago and now with GM canola the problem has dissolved.
- Mark Ch suggested that canola was still finding its natural niche - Bill, John and Leon disagreed and said that at an extra 30% grain yield (highly likely with GM hybrids) that its niche was all over WA and would give desperately needed respite from wheat on wheat and burning of stubble.
- Bill said that the EU is currently importing about 300,000 t of GM canola from Canada that is high in Omega 3 oils and that it was attracting a premium of about \$70/t and there is a risk that Australia could well need to import this GM oil from Canada because of its undisputed health properties.
- Minister mentioned the benefits in throat cancer reduction with GM corn. Bill said a similar benefits was found with an 11-fold reduction in birth defects with Mexican women when compared to the same group eating conventional corn.
- Bill discussed the benefit of Liberty being a group N, not M like Roundup.
- Minister acknowledged the 10-15% grain yield gain espoused by Canadian Dr Neil Harker with GM canola (Crop Updates 2002). Bill said that this was without TTs in the Canadian farming systems - they never used them due to the 15% yield penalty. This takes it to the 25-30% yield benefit that is consistent with John Snookes 30% hybrid benefit over TT's now grown on his farm this year.
- Crabtree referred to Mike Lamond's research with 501TT and KarooTT in the droughts (2000, 01, 02) yielding the same as farmers of 300-400 kg/ha while the conventional lines yielding 1,000-1,200 kg/ha in the same trial and it takes seconds to insert the herbicide tolerant genes into these plants.

- Crabtree urged the Minister not to make jokes about tails as some people do not realise that he is joking. Best to stick to the facts and known science. Minister expressed a sound basic-understanding of genes and promoters.
- Crabtree urged Minister to counter mis-truths peddled by anti-GM campaigners with the scientific knowledge and resources available to him through his Department.
- Researchers experimenting with GM, like GBA and Bayer, are nervous about having to spend lots of money fighting information terrorists where the Minister is in a powerful position to set the records right and do this on behalf of everyone. This would provide a much needed respite for these companies. Corrigin pollen flow example in wheat just last week! Minister said he would consider this.
- Minister made it clear to Bill that he has the authority (gatekeeper) on his own to allow an area to be GM and could see the geographical sense of an Esperance experiment.
- Minister expressed an interest in possibly supporting the Esperance idea - subject to the outcome from the 7-9th September meetings and further feedback from the Esperance community. Bill said it would fail if Bayer and Monsanto did not feel protected politically and through the media.
- Agreed that a future meeting, particularly with Prof Alan Robson, would be good.