

## **Farmers need new technology**

Bill Crabtree, Producers Forum WA.

written 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2006

Farmers across southern Australia are suffering from the GM moratoria's. It is disappointing that a network of confused people have caused unfounded fears with GMs which has stifled GM adoption for perhaps three years. GMs are the smartest agricultural technology we have seen since the adoption of no-tillage. Sadly, some people continue to promote unfounded fears and are forcing us to make do and compete with outdated technology.

The medical world has rapidly embraced this technology with many smart medicines in the last 10 years. Such GM technology is regularly immunising our families with purer and safer results than the old, conventional and impure medicinal comparisons. The same rapid GM adoption is happening in our competitive agricultural worlds of North and South America, China and India with the same safer results. This has enabled our competition to grow 30-50% more yield with 50-90% less pesticides and with much more simplicity, confidence and safety.

Is it any wonder that farmers are finding things tough at the moment. With all the January sub-soil moisture we currently have it creates a good option for growing canola. But we are competing against Canada's canola and soybeans which is almost all GM. Go to the Americas and see for yourself. Or, come with me in August 2006 and we'll see together. Alternatively, come and hear Scott Day speak tomorrow in Fremantle at the WANTFA conference.

Scott will say that the TT canola yield penalty of 30% below GM canola, that I have been suggesting, is conservative. He will suggest that farmers in the driest areas of Saskatchewan have been given a safe crop rotational option with GM canola. Come and hear, and see, why the Canadian researchers in herbicide resistant have down-sized and why Canada, in 2005, grew more canola than ever before with massive GM adoption and no market penalty.

I have discussed these issues with Mr Kim Chance on three occasions and he agrees with these facts. I have taken one of WAs most prominent academics to Mr Chance who suggested that the moratoria is making "our farmers farm with one arm tied behind their backs". I pointed out to Kim that for about 10 years and perhaps daily he has been safely eating GM foods.

Such GM foods include; soy protein additives [soups etc], yeast derived food [vegemite, beer, bread and cheese], fish and chips and other fried food [GM cotton seed oil] and much more. Yet despite this he still displays a sign, in his front office, proudly declaring WA as GM free. And he says he would not eat GM food - does this make sense? How smart will it be when we soon begin importing Canada canola oil that is GM with high oleic and low linolenic - which will reduce our cholesterol?

Mr Chance's lip service has come to nothing over the last two years - he appears only interested in stalling GMs and remaining popular with the greens who should be promoting this clean and safer food science. Mr Chance also knows that Clearfield canola is produced by mutagenesis and TT canola is produced by embryo rescue - both are a thousand times more aggressive DNA breeding techniques than GM canola. I therefore now appeal to our new WA Premier, Mr Alan Carpenter, to encourage clever science and allow WA farmers to test for themselves this clean, safe, profitable and simple technology.