

3rd November 2004

Dear Clive Brown (MLA, Minister for State Development),

I am an agronomist based in Northam, WA with 20 years experience in crop agronomy. This includes a Department of Agriculture 12 months job exchange to Canada in 1996 where I made many life-long rural friends in leading edge agriculture. I saw and continue to see, by taking several groups back to North America, and through discuss with these leaders the great progress their farmers are making with the adoption of GM technology, in particular GM canola (Roundup Ready and Liberty Link).

I am frustrated by Labor MLC Kim Chance's approach to blocking GM canola for WA by leading Australian backwards by placing a moratorium on GM crops. Kim tells me (in a letter) that this is due to market considerations, however, when you talk to those involved in marketing our grain (Grain Pool - Peter Portman) they say that we have not been able to secure a market premium in the 10 years that Canada has grown 7 mt of mostly GM canola and we have grown about 1 mt of non-GM canola and we sell to the same markets (Europe is the only discerning market and they take 3% of the market - yet they are now embracing GMs). See attached my second letter to Kim nearly a month ago, for which I am still awaiting a response. I have also a link to an article by me - posted on my website showing a \$170 million annual loss for our states backward step with not embracing GM technology. <http://www.no-till.com.au/publications/pressrelease.html>

The ABC's Landline current series on GM's is clearly presenting the facts in their 4 part series - 1/2 way through now. Please see at 12 noon on Sunday. I believe that we have been ambushed by a Seed Cleaning farmer, Julie Newman, who is VP of WAFarmers and has the ear of the WAFarmers President Trevor Delandgrafft and Kim Chance. The sad thing is that Julie's arguments are not rational and they change with the wind. She is committed, I believe (after 28 emails to and fro her), to never letting GMs into WA or Australia. You only need to read her website www.non-gm-farmers.com. Particularly the bit in red below - it is just not true and this is typical of her ramblings. See attached independent data generated by Consultant Mike Lamond - Crop Updates 2004, which shows 300 kg/ha grain yield increase to Invigor (Liberty - a new herbicide group for us in ryegrass control).

Will GM crops yield more in Australia? Julie Newman says:

Furphy = "GM crops yield more which means more profit for farmers" or "We need GM crops to increase yields to feed the world". Reality = There is no evidence that GM crops yield more but there is evidence they yield less. Although Monsanto claim a 40% yield increase with Roundup Ready canola, their best Australian trials reveal yields are 17% less than our national average. Bayer Cropscience refuse to divulge exact trial yields but trials show poor performance despite claims of yield increases up to 30%.

Canadian experience and trials have revealed GM crops are just another variety and are not outperforming non-GM crops. Subsequently the use of GM crops is not increasing rapidly as claimed, but appears to have been decreasing since 1998. GM is not living up to the promises in Canada and there are many reasons why GM crops would perform even worse in Australia. Bill speaking now - we (44 of us - farmers and 5 scientists) have just returned (August trip) from Canada and researchers and farmers everywhere were saying how fantastic these crops have been at lifting grain yields and weed control and weed resistance. Julie has never been to Canada and refuses to acknowledge how widespread GM canola is - see the Canadian Canola Council's info.

Now, for your press release in the West Australian on Friday 29/10/2004, Page: 2 to say "A

thriving boitechnology industry is part of our vision for Western Australia to be part of the global knowledge-based economy, and the WA Government is committed to assisting the industry's growth and development." Is not consistent with my experience of the State Governments activities in banning good science and important technology for the farming community. Bayer Crop Science have invested \$20 million on GM canola over the last 7 years and they can still see no path forward to market. Can you please treat this issue with the attention it deserves? My view is not 100% popular, but I am convinced it is the way forward for improved rural prosperity, soil erosion management, weed control and less atrazine in the Swan River and more.

Sincerely,

Bill Crabtree