

GM challenge embraced

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Through time, sound logic will prevail effectively dismantling the Network of Concerned Farmers (NCF) and their hype. The NCF has never genuinely pushed for both sides of the GM debate to come together. They are not interested in listening to anyone with a view different to theirs - my 28 emails to and from them recently have shown me this.

Through these emails I have acknowledged that I have learnt some things but sadly I have not been able to teach them one thing. Clearly they have drawn a line in the sand and the only way for the two parties to come together is for the pro-GM group to become anti-GM.

The NCF know that there is a 300 kg/ha of canola grain yield waiting for us with GM canola. I have sent them independent trial data several times and yet they effectively denounce this data. This is unbelievable denial!

Last week, with 11 other Western Australian farmers I visited one of the Victorian trial sites that NCF took aerial photos of - the Bayer GM canola trials. This site, north of Horsham, has a huge Bayer Crop Science banner on display on the main road - for the world to see. Indeed Julie has just visited this site herself and if she is honest she will agree with the 12 of us that there is likely a 600 kg/ha yield increase in this trial with the GM canola.

The InVigor GM canola was perhaps 3 times higher yielding than the Beacon variety, being the appropriate TT variety for this region. The GM crop will produce a profit - while the TT variety could not afford to be grown again in the conditions it has faced in this trial. This is like much of WA in four of the last five years and this reflects us largely abandoning canola.

I have always agreed that we should develop risk management with GM crops. But this need not take more than a few hours of honest discussion of the facts - try listening to the Canadians. There is a low risk with GM canola with profound benefits are guaranteed. If only WAFF and Kim Chance could just stop listening to the NCF for a few weeks. It's time we all challenge Kim and say we want this to be an election issue.

Recently the NCF (Julie) and WAFF leaders (Trevor and Julie) sat in on an all day meeting on GM's and they heard a telling comment at the end of the meeting. A young Canadian university researcher was asked his opinion on GMs and he said, words to the effect, "well my dad has grown GM canola for about 9 years and he loves it and believes it makes us more profit and helps manage our weeds and we don't have any complaints about it." WAFF needs to wake up - WAFF members you must speak up.

Everyone who has been to Canada and has soaked up the farming feel knows that GM canola has done wonders for them. Everyone who has been to South America or North America knows that we are falling behind them in the rate of their GM adoption and the subsequent improvements in efficiency and herbicide resistance weed management.

I now, hereby declare, that I will take the challenge from NCF. I will pay the industry for any lost returns in markets from embracing GM canola, if the industry pays me 1% of the extra returns in gross margin (yield and weed control) benefits that every farmer receives from their GM crops. I charge the WAFF executive to manage and administer this challenge.

Now we have a way forward it is time for NCF to put up or remain silent and allow common sense to prevail.