

Letter to the Editor:

Chance's lack of understanding leads public astray

Bill Crabtree

Last week our Agricultural Minister, Kim Chance said on page 4 of the Farm Weekly "There is just so much opposition to GMs in cereals because people would actually consume DNA". This comment is disturbing for several reasons.

Firstly, it shows a lack of knowledge of basic year 10 biology, as everyday we all consume DNA with no ill effects. However, if we are gracious and assume he meant the genetically modified DNA then year 10 biology also tells us that DNA and proteins are denatured or destroyed by our digestive system.

Secondly, it is mischievousness and misleading not declare the main reason the Canadian and US farmers have rejected Roundup Ready wheat. Scott Day said in the FarmWeekly on the 4th March 2004: "We have weed control options for wheat and don't need it and we don't want to have to deal with RR wheat volunteers." This is Canada's primary concern with RR wheat.

The Minister of Agriculture does have access to good science through his Department and he has more accurate world media information, why does he not use this? Could it be that Mr Chance is more interested in "blowing with the political wind" than in helping create a clear understanding of the issues. I believe that Mr Chance, as a Senior Public Servant, has a most important responsibility not to create fear with loose comments that show his bias.