

We will get left behind - Letter to Editor
Bill Crabtree, Northam.

I have just returned from a 10 days in Ukraine for their first International No-Tillage Conference for the CIS region. They have only just began no-tilling. They have been mostly using old run-down cropping machinery. This is all about to change. I was one of 25 “experts” invited to speak to 600 on no-tillage from 9 different countries. It was an impressive show of determination to find and embrace the latest in technology.

The CIS is consumed with a desire to be competitive and efficient in their farming practices. Some farm managers that I spoke to, with a farm of more than 70,000 hectares, have just got access to Roundup Ready canola. These people will go from 3-6 tillage passes to no-till in these fields in one year. This will dramatically improve their time of sowing, give them superb weed control, and give them a diverse crop rotation that will impact on their following wheat crop.

We will, and are, being left behind. Our innovative status could soon become a joke. Like our “clean and green” image which in reality is not sustainable. Especially when it consists of Mothers Day dust storms, 3-5 L/ha of Atrazine with TT canola, widespread stubble burning, ploughing in peas, vetch and stubble and overgrazing.

I do apologise to Julie Newman (6th Nov) for suggesting she read the graph wrongly. What she actually did was even worse, she deliberately took one data set from a graph and then took some grab for her second data set that showed what she wanted to show. Sadly this is her consistent style. We do not need selective data presentation. We need the facts. The fact is that canola competes with Soya oil and I learnt from my friends from all over the world that Soya is >60% GM and our TT canola has to compete.

The facts with Canadian wheat are that they screen their wheat to about 0.2% impurity, quite similar to our wheat that we export it. Canadians consistently grow wheat after GM canola with no problems and the EU accept 0.8% GM contamination. The NCF are continuing their cruel scare campaign and it is costing us million. It is a crime that the WAFarmers and the Minister for Agriculture believe the NCF.

To HC Engelke (25th Nov) of Badgingarra I say that I have not been sponsored by anyone. As mentioned in an earlier letter - I am thankful to the Dept of Agric and the tax payer for a year in Canada to see first hand the value of GM technology. No it is Mr Crabtree who is the fool - he has spent six weeks of his time trying to share clear truths with anti-GM activists.

As for multinationals. Should we boycott them all? No more John Deere, Ford, Toyota, Banks, Woolworths, Nike, etc? They are there because they provide something we want. The option of choice that they provide us with is of great worth. Try living in a country where multinationals and a free spirit are banned. Ukraine is an example where they have been held back by controlling people. Is that what we want?