

Letter to Countryman Editor 12.10.06

Chance has lost the plot

Bill Crabtree

I'm disappointed in Kim Chance's deluded, mischievous comments on page 11 of the Countryman (12th October) about WA's supposed market premiums for being non-GM. He will find no-one with any credibility to agree with him. What is he trying to do? Does he want the WA farmers he supposedly represents to all go broke? With his out of touch approach he is doing just that.

At the Dowerin field days six weeks ago, I told him that the premium Canadians had in 1998 was largely due to our poor TT canola variety, Karoo, which had low oil (about 36%) and high erucic acid. Yet, he seems to have conveniently forgotten or ignored that fact? He also knows we now grow almost no canola, largely because no-one can afford to grow it. Given our TT canola yields 40% less than if it was GM, this is not surprising.

For 10 years we have received a small \$10/t premium from the EU for just 10% of our crop for being non-GM. Mathematically, this works out to a \$1/t premium. How good is that when we could be growing 1.2-3.0 t/ha of canola regularly, being 75% of the yield of our wheat? This is what the Canadians do and that is why they grow GM canola almost exclusively - it yields strongly and gives near perfect weed control.

Minister Chance, you are either incompetent or deluded! Or, could it be that like a mindless puppet, you allow the Premier to pull the strings for the sake of city votes or Greens preferences? It is time you step aside and let someone else help the rural community stay viable and compete with the rest of the world.

We are not asking much. Just do not stop our progress—do not interfere, let us compete—lift your moratorium! If we are going to go broke at farming then let it be at our doing, not your's. Your misdirected ideology is forcing WA farmers to loose an average \$60,000 per farm per year.

How will you live with yourself when you retire on your large government superannuation knowing you deliberately denied thousands of WA farmers access to a proven technology which could have kept them in business?

Bill Crabtree