



GM debate

I WOULD like to put forward some points in response to Professor West's comments (*Farm Weekly* November 17) about R & D and policy makers having a distorted view of the agricultural sector.

Farmers grow food. Consumers eat food. Why would researchers develop genetically modified food when consumers do not want it?

Why are governments investing so heavily in biotechnology and backing trials of GM wheat when there is no market for it?

Why are farmers seduced into growing GM canola with promises of frost-free and drought-tolerant wheat around the corner when this is not true?

There are confused and mixed messages between consumers, farmers, R & D and policy makers.

While consumers and the market send strong signals that GM crops are not wanted in food, acknowledged by Terry Redman and Colin Barnett, our agriculture department invests heavily in gene centres at Merredin and Katanning and backs GM wheat trials in our rural communities.

What is going on?

On the farm we are paying for the arrogance and ignorance of this government and the shortsightedness of

research and development and industry players.

They have ignored farmers who have warned of the many issues of concern with GM canola whether it is problems of contamination, difficulties of coexistence, agronomic issues relating to use and over-use of Roundup or the very real potential to lose our European markets and be back competing with Canadian canola at a reduced price.

Mr Redman must resign, the moratorium be re-instated and the growing of GM crops ended in this State.

**JANETTE LIDDELOW
Williams**

GREENS MLC Lynn MacLaren stated on her website that 100 tonnes of GM canola had been knocked down in a Cunderdin hail storm and "this" washed into a neighbouring non-GM paddock.

The non-GM farmer claims to have found three GM seeds germinated in his paddock.

They must have been huge seeds if they weighted 100t.

I respect the right of non-GM farmers to grow their crops, but let's keep this in perspective.

BRIAN ELLIS MLC

Member for the Agricultural Region

CURRENT activist activities are aimed at intimidating policy makers and preventing farmers from having a choice of whether to grow approved GM products.

This activity is hard to understand when such crops have been proven safe, healthy and environmentally beneficial and have been used by many of Australia's agricultural competitors for more than 15 years.

The activist groups foster fear and uncertainty in communities, turning neighbour on neighbour with an almost fundamentalist fervour, without examining the proven science and safety of GM crops.

Like the WA Farmers Federation, I too, do not believe these anti-GM groups have Australian farmers' best interests at heart.

For the sake of agriculture, the WA Government must continue to support those farming communities who see through such unfounded and alarmist rhetoric.

**MATTHEW COSSEY
CEO
Croplife Australia**