



GM canola 'welcome'

The production of GM canola in WA is a hot topic which needs some cold, hard facts to take the fever out of the debate.

Agriculture Region MLC Brian Ellis is a third generation farmer from Bindi Bindi who has grown commercial canola on his property for decades.

Mr Ellis recently attended the Cunderdin GM trials open day and said he was impressed with the vigour of the crops and the evidence of good weed management.

"As a grower who has been obliged to use strong pre-emergence chemicals, I welcome the option of GM canola for weed control and to minimise tillage," he said.

"This reduces soil erosion, improves soil



Agriculture Region MLC Brian Ellis with Bob Taylor, of the Northampton Motors and Machinery Restoration Group.

moisture content, and creates less sediment and chemical run-off in waterways."

Opponents worry that the introduction of GM canola will lead to a loss of interna-

tional markets and a reduction in premium prices.

But according to the Federal Agriculture Department, countries which produce GM products dominate world trade in grains and oilseeds.

The department also says identity preservation is an issue that the Australian grain industry "can take in its stride" along with conventional grains such as durum wheat and malting barley.

Because canola pollen is quite heavy and sticky, it only remains airborne for a few metres and then dries out quickly.

Another GM myth was busted when a 10-year US-based study published in Nature magazine found that GM canola plants did not become weedy, invasive or self-sustaining.

A link to Mr Ellis's GM canola speeches in the WA Parliament can be found on his website, www.brianellis.com.au.

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