



What is the purpose of the trials?

The purpose of the commercial trials is to assess whether or not industry can effectively segregate the Roundup Ready canola from other canola. It is also to look at the agronomic performance of the crop – ie how it grows in different areas.

Have there been GM canola trials in WA before?

Yes. Non-commercial trials of approximately 10 ha of GM canola took place between 1996 and 2003. These trials looked at the agronomic performance of GM canola, but did not progress onto harvest and delivery.

Where will the GM trials be held?

This decision allows the process to begin to choose trial sites. The trials could be located across the wheatbelt and include some in the lower rainfall areas to ensure technology can be assessed under a range of different environments. There will be approximately 20 individual trials. Interested growers will be required to undertake a stewardship program and growers who can comply with Best Management Practice guidelines will be chosen to participate. Information on the selected sites will be posted on the DAFWA website.

Will the government consider a strict liability regime?

The Government is not considering the introduction of strict liability legislation. Australian and international reports have concluded that common law is sufficient to deal with any issues that may arise from growing GM crops.

What assurances can be given to farmers who want to remain GM-free?

As a condition of allowing the trials the GM crops will need to be grown using Best Management Practices. Harvesting and transport of the canola will be undertaken in such a way as to prevent seed loss outside the sown area. The Roundup Ready canola will be delivered to specific delivery points in the CBH system where it can be segregated and monitored.

Cross pollination between canola varieties has been studied in numerous scientific literature. Differences in outcrossing depends on varieties, pollen source, recipient crop and environmental conditions.





The regulatory body (OGTR) that approved the commercial release of GM canola in 2003 stated that levels of outcrossing will be very low, decreasing significantly as distance away from the pollen source increases.

The trials will monitor this to ensure that the agreed government and industry standard for non-GM canola can be met.

What will happen to the GM canola harvested?

WA canola is currently exported to Japan, China, Europe, Bangladesh and Pakistan. It is expected that the GM canola will be sold to export markets that accept GM canola. These markets include Japan, China, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Europe is expected to accept GM canola for biodiesel production early in 2009.

What involvement will the Department of Agriculture and Food have in the trials?

The Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) will oversee the trials and provide an independent report on the outcomes.

Will the Government allow commercial production of GM canola?

A decision on this has not been made. The outcomes of the 2009 trials will assist the Government in determining its policy position for future years.

What will the Minister do to address health and safety concerns regarding GM foods?

The GM crops which have been licensed for commercial release in Australia are those that have been assessed by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and Food Standards Australia New Zealand to be as safe for human health and the environment as the non-GM varieties. The government supports, and has confidence in, the national system for the regulation of gene technology and food safety under which these assessments are made.

Will the introduction of GM canola have trade implications for WA?

GM technology is being adopted globally and the majority of our exporting partners are recognising that co-existence of GM and non-GM crops requires a threshold level for accidental presence. Thresholds have been set in the most sensitive countries such as the EU. The agreed industry and government standard for 'adventitious presence' in Australia is 0.9%, this is the same in the EU and more stringent than the Japanese requirement of 5 per cent.

