



press clip

# Planting size surprise

Haidee Vandenberghe

WA growers have sown about 70,000 hectares of GM canola in the State's first year of commercial plantings of the contentious crop.

Just two months ago, Monsanto had predicted plantings less than half that size, but with grower declarations due in by Tuesday, their expectations had been exceeded.

More than 300 growers planted GM canola for the first time this season.

The size of the planting represents about 0.08 per cent of the total WA canola crop, estimated by the Grain Industry Association of WA to be 88,730ha.

Jason Haywood, who farms with his father, Barry, and brother Simon, is one of those growers, seeding almost a third of his 760ha canola program to GM.

The Haywoods are trialling two types of GM canola — 180ha of Roundup Ready Scorpion and 64ha of Roundup Ready Hybrid Hyola.

Jason said that they wanted to see how GM canola would perform under their conditions.

"We were a bit concerned about how well the Roundup Ready would work on radish, so we tried to pick paddocks with a low radish burden," he said.

"We've also pushed into a bit of worse stuff just to see what it's like.

"It's definitely dearer to put it in and I know a few people have dropped it out because of that, but we thought it was worth having a look at how it goes on our farm."

Seeding wound up last week and after a dry couple of weeks the Haywoods received 14mm earlier this week.

"We put in pretty much all the canola dry," Jason said. "Our canola is a fair bit behind on last year, but if we can get 1.2 tonnes we're still going to get a return with that and it helps with our rotation."

Now that grower declarations have been lodged with Monsanto, the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) expects to have a map representing the plantings online by early July.

The map will state the hectares planted and number of GM growers in each shire.

Audits to evaluate grower compliance with the Roundup Ready licence and stewardship requirements begin next month.

However, the audits are conducted on a voluntary basis with DAFWA recently sending out letters calling for participants.



Jason Haywood with Scorpion Roundup Ready canola that was sown on May 7 at his farm which is 27km from Goomalling.

PHOTO: DANELLA BEVIS