



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
MINISTER FOR ENERGY
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES
MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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GM canola gets go ahead: Macdonald

Approval has been granted for genetically modified (GM) canola to be grown commercially in NSW, however limited seed stocks means there will be a small crop, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said today.

Minister Macdonald approved the commercial production of GM canola following advice from the NSW Expert Committee on Gene Technology.

It follows the decision by the lemma Government late last year to amend legislation to allow commercial production of GM crops under strict conditions.

“This is a new era of choice for the State’s farmers,” Minister Macdonald said.

“From today the commercial production of GM canola in NSW is legal, provided that it has been approved for commercial release by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR).

“This move brings us in line with Victoria and overseas countries such as Canada, which is the dominant exporter of canola, where GM canola is approved.”

Minister Macdonald said the moratorium had only been lifted for GM canola and is consistent with requirements of the Gene Technology (GM Crop Moratorium) Act.

“I received an industry application wanting to grow GM canola on a commercial scale in NSW,” Minister Macdonald said.

“The application was required to clearly address the key criteria set out in NSW legislation for removal of the moratorium on GM canola.

“These include identification of the requirements demanded by key domestic and international markets for GM canola, threshold levels for accidental or unintended presence of GM traits, robust supply chain management processes and any approvals required under law of the key domestic or international markets relating the importation of GM canola.

“As part of the legislated requirements I referred the application to the Expert Committee to assess and the Committee’s subsequent advice was that the application met the criteria required.

“I note that the advice of the Expert Committee is consistent with the conclusions of the independent review of the moratorium legislation in NSW which I commissioned last year and was headed by former National Party MP Ian Armstrong, OBE.

“I am aware that there will be a limited amount of GM canola seed available in NSW for this season and the Department will continue to liaise closely with the canola industry in NSW to ensure that the introduction of GM canola in NSW is consistent with the legislation.”

The moratorium remains in place for the commercial production of all other GM food crops in NSW.

Information on NSW legislation on GM food crops is available at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

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