

## Farmers want NSW Govt to end GM moratorium

3 September 2007

THE NEW South Wales (NSW) Government must seize the opportunities gene technology poses for Australia's agricultural production base – both in terms of better and more drought-resistant crops, and our long-term economic efficiency and competitiveness on the world stage.

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) says NSW farmers have been 'left behind' by an international marketplace that has already embraced GM as a safe and viable science. Australian farmers are now being 'held back' from cutting-edge farm techniques, based on out-dated hysteria.

"What was once a prudent 'wait and see' policy, is no longer viable," NFF President David Crombie said. "The science is in... the world has moved on from the traditional and overtly emotional arguments against GM crops. Australia now must play catch up – and do so quickly – to ensure we win a much greater share of world markets, opportunities which until the GM moratoria are scrapped, will continue to pass us by.

"Farmers must have the opportunity to adopt the method of production best suited to their customers' needs – be that GM, conventional, organic or any combination of these methods... points of differentiation they can pursue to meet marketplace desires.

"It is the marketplace – both domestic and international – that is demanding the introduction of GM crops. The 'status quo' will not do. State and Territory Governments must not arbitrarily deny farmers pursuing sensible, scientifically-proven and time-tested methods of production.

"Australian farmers are well-placed to responsibly harness the enormous opportunities gene technology offers... reducing use of pesticides and herbicides, maximising water efficiency, resilience in adverse growing conditions and boosting production yields."

While pushing for the state moratoria to be lifted, the NFF says the production decisions of one farmer should not unreasonably impinge on the ability of other farmers in meeting the requirements and expectations of the market they chose to meet.

"As with any new technology, it is vital that producers identify and thoroughly assess potential risks, and implement strategies to appropriately manage them," Mr Crombie added. "The NFF is satisfied appropriate Australian safeguards exist to ensure food safety and the sustained integrity of organic and conventional food production.

"In fact, Australia's Gene Technology Act 2000 establishes standards regarded as the world's most stringent for assessing GM plants for human and environmental safety. Australia's rigorous gene technology regulatory system, and the careful process required to meet commercialisation, means that, with the exception of cotton and canola, new GM plant varieties are unlikely to be ready for another seven years – highlighting just how far behind Australian farmers are in the world market.

"The moratoria had their day. Uptake of gene technology will result in substantial benefits for Australian farmers, the environment, consumers and Australia's place in the

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<http://www.nff.org.au/read/2441922902.html>

2 of 2 3/09/2007 1:15 PM

international economy."

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The NFF's submission to the NSW Government GM Moratorium Review Panel is available online at: [www.nff.org.au/policy/submissions.html](http://www.nff.org.au/policy/submissions.html)[Submissions to Government]

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