

GREENPEACE MEDIA STATEMENT

ABARE report on genetically engineered crops 'a joke'

Sydney , Tuesday 1st April: Greenpeace have slammed an ABARE report on genetically engineered (GE) crops, released yesterday. The report makes a string of assumptions about the market acceptance and yields of GE that are not borne out by the facts. Louise Sales, Greenpeace Genetic Engineering Campaigner said:

"The ABARE report's assumption that there will be no market restrictions on GE crops is patently ludicrous when consumers are rejecting GE crops in all our major grain export markets. These include Europe, Japan and the Middle East.

"There have been no independent trials in Australia comparing yields between GE and conventional crops that prove GE crops will increase yields by 9-10%, as claimed in the ABARE report. Those studies that have been done show that GE crops have no higher yields than comparable non-GE herbicide tolerant and hybrid varieties.

"Contrary to the ABARE report, other emerging agricultural economies are not adopting GE crops such as canola. Argentina rejected GE canola because of concerns that it would hybridise with weedy relatives, creating uncontrollable 'superweeds'. There is also no evidence that China , the largest canola producing country in the world, intends to introduce GE canola.

"GE canola has been rejected by all the major canola producing countries in the world, apart from Canada , and GE wheat is not grown anywhere in the world. GE wheat has been rejected worldwide because consumers have made it clear they don't want GE in their daily bread.

"Whilst Australia is opening its doors to GE crops, with New South Wales and Victoria both allowing the commercial planting of GE canola this year, other countries all over the world are rejecting them. Just this week Romania joined other European countries with bans on GE crops - which include Greece , France , Austria , Hungary and Poland .

"It's appalling that taxpayer's money has gone towards producing thinly veiled propaganda for the biotechnology industry," concluded Ms Sales.

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