

MEDIA RELEASE

GM Technology in the Western Australian Grains Industry

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The Grain Industry Association of WA (Inc) - GIWA - in the recently released WA Grains Industry Strategy 2025+ ("Repeal the State legislation on GM crops" page 15) has identified repealing the WA state legislation on Genetically Modified (GM) crops as an example of reducing red tape and regulation which currently inhibits the competitiveness and profitability of the WA grains sector.

GIWA is a member based not-for-profit association which represents the grain value chain in Western Australia, from plant breeders through to grain marketers and processors, and recently formulated its industry strategy – WA Grains Industry Strategy 2025+ - to address global food demand and double the value of the WA grains industry to \$10 billion by 2025

<http://www.giwa.org.au/announcements/wa-grains-industry-strategy-2025-1>

GIWA has every confidence in the application of the existing Commonwealth legislation *Gene Technology Act 2000*, and it's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, to Western Australian grain production.

The core principle adopted by the WA grains industry is that *co-existence of technologies ensures growers and consumers can exercise their choice to respectively use new production technologies and make consumption choices*, and that the WA grains industry would benefit from a national approach to legislation which supports this outcome.

In 2015, according to the Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia, the global area dedicated to GM crops reached more than 175 million hectares across 27 countries.

To date, under the exemptions of the *WA Genetically Modified Crop Free Areas Act 2003* which allow GM cotton and GM canola to be grown in WA, industry has convincingly demonstrated its ability to manage co-existing technologies through its supply chains, in a self-regulated manner. More than 20% of the West Australian canola crop is GM canola and this statistic is growing.

The benefits of GM crops such as GM canola provide WA growers with access to:

- the world's best production technology
- proven lower chemical and pesticide usage
- proven management strategies for crop rotation
- demonstrably higher yields and improved profits for farmers

A global example of proven GM technology over more than a decade is found in the Canadian grains industry, a competitor to Australia, where over 90% of the canola crop is GM canola.

GIWA believes the future productive gains from GM crops will outweigh any premium for traditional non-GM crops.

Without access to such technology for any future GM crops, the downside is that Western Australia, which produces 40% of Australia's grain crop and exports almost everything it produces, would be less competitive with the rest of the world's grain producers.

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