

## FARMERS APPLAUD LABOR FOR ADDRESSING GM ISSUES

Network of Concerned Farmers, Press Release, 2 September 2008

The WA Labor party today announced an increased funding of \$5million to support farmers to remain GM free. The Network of Concerned Farmers (NCF) have congratulated the WA Labor Government decision claiming it shows the depth of their understanding of the GM debate and their willingness to resolve the problems.

"WA Labor has a multifaceted approach to genuinely deal with the major issues rather than the negligent policies of Liberals and Nationals which clearly ignore the problems," said Julie Newman, National Spokesperson for the Network of Concerned Farmers.

"Farmers can't afford GM crops and the risks associated with them."

The announced funding for more non GM plant biotechnology is most welcome as is the funding to assist WA food producers to market their produce as GM free. The Labor party has previously provided funding for independent health testing and have lobbied the Federal government to improve GM labelling.

The NCF claim that the risks of growing GM include health, environmental, loss of the right to replant seed, spiralling higher costs, market resistance, inability to provide a GM-free product and new corporate contracts leading to loss of farmer control over their farm businesses.

"The Liberals and Nationals just can't ignore these risks."

The NCF is appalled at the rashness of the policies of the State Liberal party and National Party claiming they have no understanding of the issue or the magnitude of the risks to the WA farming sector.

"With their 1,000ha trials, the Liberals are promoting backdoor commercial release when there is no intention and no way known to prevent contamination. They claim that commercial trials are needed to test the coexistence protocols but the coexistence protocols are actually designed to allow contamination, not prevent it. Even large scale trials will remove the GM-free choice for farmers and consumers."

"The Nationals are blindly promoting commercial release of any GM crops, including canola and wheat providing they are not sold in the food chain. This policy risks losing all of our international wheat markets as there is zero tolerance for GM material in all international wheat markets."

"If the Liberals and Nationals spent the time researching the issue more thoroughly, they would not have such negligent policies. We ask them to urgently reconsider their policies in the interests of farmers and of maintaining our markets."

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Network of Concerned Farmers, <http://www.non-gm-farmers.com>