

Gene Ethics Media release 23/5/12

KFC commits to Australian GM-free canola oil But many others fry in GM cottonseed and canola oil

"Gene Ethics congratulates KFC for its move to Australian non-Genetically Manipulated (non-GM), high-oleic canola oil this week," says Gene Ethics Director, Bob Phelps.

Chief KFC supply chain officer Michael Clark says that at this stage the company will only buy non-GM canola oils. Mr Clark also says: "Some consumers find it important that it's non-GM and if we can source non-GM canola we'll continue to do so."

"This should be possible as far less than 10% of Australian canola is GM," Phelps says.

KFC spokesperson Angela Cooper also confirmed by email that: "We have been working closely with our suppliers to ensure our canola oil is not sourced from genetically modified canola seeds while also meeting the demand of our KFC stores nationwide. Our suppliers conduct regular testing ..."

"But many other fast food outlets fry in GM canola oil or Peerless' Formula 40 cooking oil, made from Australian GM cottonseed oil," Phelps says.

Formula 40's ingredients include: Vegetable Oil (95% min. Cottonseed Oil) Antifoam (900a Dimethyl polysiloxane). See: <http://www.peerlessfoods.com.au/store/viewItem.asp?IdProduct=5>

"Over 90% of Australian cotton is genetically manipulated (GM), to tolerate being sprayed with Roundup weedkiller and to make its own built in insect toxins. We question the safety, sustainability and environmental impacts of GM cotton production." Mr Phelps says.

"The GM oil from cottonseed is marketed by Peerless as Formula 40 for frying fast foods or may be in generic vegetable oils, sold unlabelled to shoppers.

"Under Australian Food Standards there are no requirements for restaurant and fast food meals to be labelled. Refined GM vegetable oils are also exempt from labelling though most contain traces of GM DNA and protein that the Food Standard says should be labelled.

"So, to avoid GM oils customers ought to ask all fast or convenience food shops what frying oil they use, and also leave unlabelled bottles of generic vegetable oils on supermarket shelves.

"Gene Ethics is pleased that KFC took the lead, away from palm oil to non-GM canola in response to customer concerns over the environmental and animal impacts of palm oil grown in Indonesia and Malaysia.

"We hope this will lead to others following suit and making the change to the healthier and safer non-GM options now available," Mr Phelps concludes.

More comment: Bob Phelps 0449 769 066 or 03 9347 4500

Background:

Cooper, Angela <Angela.Cooper@yum.com>

Date: Tue, May 22, 2012 at 12:20 PM

Subject: KFC Canola Oil - Genetically Modified Enquiry

Note: Yum! owns KFC.

Thank you for your recent enquiry about the canola oil we use at KFC.

KFC makes every effort to source our products from local Australian farmers. For our cooking, we use high oleic canola oil supplied by Cargill, MSM Milling and Integro Foods who source the canola seed exclusively from Australian growers. All our suppliers comply with the requirements of the Australian Oilseed Federation Standard to be considered non-genetically modified.

We have been working closely with our suppliers to ensure our canola oil is not sourced from genetically modified canola seeds while also meeting the demand of our KFC stores nationwide. Our suppliers conduct regular testing to ensure their canola seeds have less than 0.9 per cent adventitious presence of GM material, as per the standards defined by the Australian Oilseeds Federation.

We have been testing the use of high oleic canola oil in a number of our stores and will be expanding the usage of this oil to all our restaurants by the end of May 2012. This has been a long process as we needed to wait for these specially grown crops to come into maturity, and the resultant seeds processed before we could expand the use of the new oil nationwide.

We are committed to providing our customers with fresh, great-tasting food, sourced from trusted suppliers.

Thank you again for your interest and we look forward to welcoming you back to KFC in the near future.