

Gene Ethics Media Release - Tuesday October 7 2008 NSW GM site map published today

Gene Ethics' map of Genetically Manipulated (GM) Roundup tolerant canola sites and GM canola depots in NSW (See: <http://www.geneethics.org>) was published today with information gleaned from media reports. GM canola pollen and seed dispersal threaten many rural industries with gene contamination.

"Our map will help protect GM-free grain growers, beekeepers and harvesters from GM contamination," says Bob Phelps, Executive Director of Gene Ethics.

"Fewer than one in a thousand farmers are growing GM canola this year, but they pose an unacceptable risk of GM contamination to all other farmers, rural industries, local government and shoppers.

"Monsanto has grossly inflated the scale of GM plantings and the number of GM farmers to draw others into buying its patented seed next year."

"GM canola contamination is inevitable if we don't act to stop it now as the GM giants are determined to make all NSW and Victorian canola GM as soon as possible,"

"States acknowledged that GM segregation and containment are impossible when they set a 0.5% threshold for 'accidental' GM contamination in seed for planting, and 0.9% in harvested grain.

"It's impossible to stop the spread of canola seed during windrowing, harvest and transport, with at least 2.5 million seeds per hectare and they can lie dormant for up to ten years before germinating.

"Some GM canola will fail in the drought, and when it is cut for hay it will not be labelled, also ensuring that other farms are contaminated.

Graham Strong, a Network of Concerned Farmers (NCF) member who farms 1900 hectares of grain and wool at Narrandera says: "I fully support the Gene Ethics' map as it will assist growers to satisfy grain buyers in our area who require GM-free declarations."

"We are required to certify that we have tried to stay GM-free, so we need to know for sure where GM canola is grown."

"Gene Ethics map is useful but I want the government to set up an official GM site register that shows all GM farms and the route that trucks will take to the silos so GM contamination is tracked.

"GM canola is being grown just 10 kms south east of my farm and it threatens a key local wheat market for all Riverina growers.

"Site information may also give us some defence against liability claims when there is GM contamination.

"These GM cockies are not cutting edge - they are being led into dependence on GM and are undermining everyone's options for marketing wheat in the future," Mr Strong concludes.

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