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Gene Ethics MEDIA RELEASE 10/11/09

Give back Monsanto's GM canola growing wild in Victoria

Gene Ethics' activists will hand back Monsanto's Genetically Manipulated (GM) canola to Agricultural Minister Joe Helper and Monsanto at the GM 'coexistence' conference being held at Melbourne's Convention Centre today. The GM canola was found growing wild on roadsides in Victoria and New South Wales and collected by GM Cropwatch.

"Just one season after the introduction of commercial GM canola in Victoria and New South Wales it is now growing wild on many roadsides. GM coexistence is a con," says Gene Ethics Director Bob Phelps.

"Industry and government are taking no responsibility for GM canola contamination. This is unacceptable so we are returning the GM canola collected by GM Cropwatch to Monsanto and Minister Helper.

"Grain marketers Elders and Co-operative Bulk Handlers will not buy canola from any facilities where GM is stored this year as their local, Japanese and European customers want only GM-free," Mr Phelps said.

Jessica Harrison of GM Cropwatch says, "Both industry and government claim that GM canola can coexist with and be segregated from non-GM canola but the evidence shows this is false."

"Australia's largest grain handler, Graincorp will comingle GM and non-GM canola in 15% of its silos this year, showing coexistence is a political and commercial decision that has little science behind it.

"Non-GM canola farmers must be protected from having to foot the bill if their crops are GM contaminated and their markets are lost.

Industry and government must take responsibility for their GM adventures and protect non-GM farmers," Ms Harrison concludes.

Media Opportunity

Activity/Visual: Activists in white protection suits and masks return bags of GM canola to Agriculture Minister Joe Helper and Monsanto executives before the conference.

Where: Main entrance, GM 'Coexistence' Conference, Melbourne Convention Centre, Southbank (next to the Hilton Hotel)

When: Tuesday November 10, 9am

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