

MEDIA RELEASE

JOINT REGULATORY DECISION ON MONSANTO GM CANOLA

Following rigorous evaluation and extended public consultation, the Australian Gene Technology Regulator, Dr Sue Meek, announced today that she has decided to issue a licence for the commercial release of Monsanto Australia's Roundup Ready® canola.

Roundup Ready® canola has been modified to be tolerant to the herbicide glyphosate, which can then be used to control weeds while the crop is being grown.

Monsanto's Roundup Ready® canola has been previously trialed under limited and controlled conditions in Australia over a number of years and is approved for growing and food use in Japan, Canada and the United States of America.

The oil from Roundup Ready® canola is highly processed which removes DNA and protein. Roundup Ready® canola oil has been assessed and approved for human consumption in Australia by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

“We prepared the risk assessment of Monsanto's application in close consultation with a wide range of expert groups and authorities. I also received valuable input from the extended public feedback process,” Dr Meek said.

“The comprehensive risk assessment has demonstrated to me that the commercial scale release of Roundup Ready® canola will not pose a risk to human health and safety or the environment.”

During the evaluation of Roundup Ready® canola, the potential for development of herbicide-resistant weeds if glyphosate is used inappropriately was identified.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), which is responsible for the registration of agricultural chemicals, has today also approved the use of Roundup Ready® herbicide for weed control in Roundup Ready® canola crops.

“The APVMA has also undertaken an extensive assessment of the Roundup Ready® herbicide during which the potential for the development of herbicide resistance was evaluated,” Dr Meek said.

“As a result, the APVMA has applied a number of conditions on the registration of Roundup Ready® herbicide to ensure responsible management of Roundup Ready® herbicide use on Roundup Ready® canola, and to minimise the risk of development of herbicide resistance.”

Dr Meek said that during the evaluation, concerns were expressed about possible economic and market impacts if Roundup Ready® canola spreads to adjoining farms.

“I am advised that unwanted Roundup Ready® canola plants can be effectively removed with a range of approved herbicides and mechanical weed control methods. Using a mixture of weed control options is consistent with integrated weed management practice,” she said.

“I also understand that a number of industry initiatives have also been developed to facilitate segregation of GM from non-GM canola. Industry and State governments are also consulting on the marketability and trade issues, as distinct from health, safety and environmental issues.”

Further information on the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan, the evaluation process and the licence is available from the OGTR website at www.ogtr.gov.au.

Media inquiries:

Kay McNiece, OGTR Media Adviser 0412 132 585

Further information on the Australian regulatory approvals for Roundup Ready® canola is available from:

OGTR:

www.ogtr.gov.au (under What's New)

APVMA:

http://services.apvma.gov.au/PubcrisWebApp/ProductDetails?tab=General&prodCode=54112

FSANZ:

http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/standardsdevelopment/applications/applicationa363foodp951.cfm