



Tuesday, September 3, 2019

## Lifting the moratorium on GM canola and what it means for SA growers

With the recent State Government decision to lift the Genetically Modified Food Crops Moratorium on mainland South Australia, and a six-week consultation currently under way, the Hart Field Day comes at a perfect time for local graingrowers thinking ahead to next planting season.

Among the 22 rolling sessions planned for the field day on Tuesday, September 17, agronomist Simon Mock will share his experience with genetically modified crops in Victoria, and research agronomist Andrew Ware will share his knowledge of canola varieties.

Simon, from Clovercrest Consulting based at Horsham, Victoria, says South Australian growers are in an advantageous position, with an opportunity to “learn from some of the mistakes and challenges of other states”.

With clients spread across the West Wimmera district of Victoria (as well as the Upper South East of SA), Simon has seen the impact of GM crops in a medium rainfall zone for the past decade.

“I’ve experienced over that time the advantages and disadvantages of growing genetically modified canola and how it fits into farming systems, and also where it has a value over other canola crops,” he said.

“The uptake of GM canola hasn’t been as rapid as I thought it may have been when it first became an option in our region.

“Part of that has been due to an increase in cost for growing it in terms of seed costs, and partly because there is a bit of a discount for the production compared to non-GM prices, along with concerns around glyphosate resistance in ryegrass and other weeds.

“I’ve probably got only 10 per cent of my clients growing GM canola, and I’d say only about 5pc of the region is growing it overall, but it’s likely more in higher rainfall zones.”

Simon said South Australia was in a better position coming into the industry, compared to its interstate counterparts a decade ago.

“It’s probably an advantage coming in now, in Victoria I think some of the seed companies were caught a bit on the hop when the moratorium was lifted here and in other states,” he said.

“The market is now more mature and there’s more variety options available to the SA farmers looking to plant GM canola now.”

Port Lincoln research agronomist Andrew Ware has spent nine years working on National Variety Trails (NVT) in SA as well as writing the canola component of the SA Sowing Guide, providing growers and advisors with information on the latest available varieties and their attributes.

Andrew will be at the Hart Field Day to share his knowledge on canola varieties and assist farmers interpret some of the interstate GM findings and help unravel the puzzle about how it can fit to SA conditions.

“Being based in SA I don’t have any experience in growing GM canola as the moratoria that has been in existence has applied to research as well, but I can help growers and advisors interpret the data that has been generated interstate and how that might apply to South Australian conditions,” he said.

“I will be able to draw on experience I have working on national projects, where growing GM canola has been investigated.

“I’m sure many SA growers will enjoy having the option to grow Roundup Ready and Truflex® canola, as it will provide some alternative weed control options, however interstate experience suggests it may not be something that every grower in the state will adopt.”

See ‘Canola varieties including GM options’ on the Hart Field Day program to hear more from Andrew and Simon.

To register for the Hart Field Day, or for more information, take a look at the Hart Field-Site Group website [www.hartfieldsite.org.au](http://www.hartfieldsite.org.au) or contact Sandy Kimber on 0427 423 154 or email [admin@hartfieldsite.org.au](mailto:admin@hartfieldsite.org.au)

**Media contact: Hart research and extension manager Dr Sarah Noack 0420 218 420.**



Photo: Guest speakers Simon Mock from Clovercrest Consulting in Horsham, Victoria (left), and Andrew Ware, from EPAG Research, Port Lincoln, South Australia.