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Barnett suggests GM canola reality

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Premier Colin Barnett has given his strongest indication yet that genetically modified (GM) canola will be a reality for the State's grain farmers.

"The trials have been done on a very professional, scientific basis and I am not going to prejudge them," Mr Barnett said. "But from what I am hearing today, I expect that to be a positive result for canola."

The Premier made the comments while standing in York farmer Charlie Boyle's 60-hectare GM canola trial recently.

The State Government will decide whether to allow full-scale GM canola production in February.

"I guess the next thing would be once these 17 trials are completed, there will be a proper scientific evaluation on that and I guess we will then make a decision," Mr Barnett said.

"For the moment we have only committed to cotton and GM canola (trials). But we will proceed carefully because I recognise there are a range of attitudes, maybe not so much in the farming community but across the community."

Mr Barnett said that from a personal point of view he supported GM technology, while being aware that its detractors and the Government would proceed "very, very carefully and be sure of the ground at each stage".

Cunderdin farmer John Snooke, who is also growing GM canola, met the Premier in York.

Mr Snooke urged Mr Barnett to lift the GM moratorium.

He said if farmers were only allowed to grow GM canola next year by an exemption order under the State Government's GM Crops Free Areas Act, it would send the wrong message to investors and research companies.



Premier Colin Barnett chats with York farmer Charlie Boyle about his GM canola crop