



press clip

# Burke endorses GM technology

By GREGOR HEARD

FEDERAL Agriculture Minister Tony Burke gave genetically-modified technology a strong endorsement at the Australian Grains Industry Conference in Melbourne on Tuesday.

"I see GM as a positive. It's obviously not going to be the be all and end all of providing world food security, but it is a piece of the jigsaw," he said.

"Biotech is a massive field and the synergies between researchers is likely to be a boost for the world production."

Mr Burke also said he had made his views known to political leaders in South Australia, where a moratorium prevented production of GM crops. "It's a decision that is totally up to them, but they know what I think on this one," he said.

Mr Burke said there was increasing grower approval for GM lines, while acknowledging there had been some market resistance.

"You can see that markets which do not buy GM grain have no issue with livestock fed on GM grain," he said.

However, the news on GM was not so good from representatives of South East Asian wheat buyers

at the conference.

Joe Chan, who purchasing wheat for South East Asian customers, said while flour millers had no intrinsic opposition to GM, the lead would be taken from government, and there was still a general consumer unease towards the technology. Along with his upbeat view on GM, Mr Burke was also positive about the Australian grains industry, despite the spectre of climate change and the global economic slowdown.

Mr Burke told 700 grain traders, growers and industry representatives at the conference that the fundamentals for the industry were sound.

"The fundamental demand for food has not changed. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates the world needs to double food production in the next 20 years," he said.

## Key points

- Biotech is a massive field
- Fundamental food demand has not changed
- Views made known to SA politicians



**PRODUCTION PUZZLE:** Federal Agriculture Minister Tony Burke has told a conference in Melbourne that GM technology is "part of the jigsaw" in the future production of grain in Australia.