



## Countryman(WA)

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# GM canola comes on strong

Claire Tyrrell

When the State Government allowed some WA farmers to trial genetically modified (GM) canola this season, Beverley farmer Duncan Young jumped at the opportunity to grow the controversial crop.

Duncan runs a 2150-hectare property about 20km south of York and this year planted a 1300ha cropping program. He also runs a flock of 8500 Merinos.

Duncan wanted to be part of the GM canola trials so he could see how the crop grew in his area.

"I'd like to see how it grows on my farm and in this climate," he said. "This State is such a big varied area that if there's a trial in Esperance it means nothing to you here."

After gaining approval, Duncan sowed a 60ha trial paddock with 52ha of Roundup Ready canola and 5ha of Triazene Tolerant (TT) canola.

The remaining portion contains a Nufarm trial plot, with several GM and non-GM canola varieties.

Duncan is growing two varieties of Roundup Ready canola to see which is more suited to his land.

"Half the paddock is Pacific Seeds 601 and the other half is Pacific Seeds 502," he said.

"They're slightly different maturity and flower within about 10 days of each other."

Duncan seeded the trial paddock on May 26, sowing the entire 60ha on the same day.

He noticed a significant difference in the growth rates of Roundup Ready and TT canola, with the GM variety sprouting well before the TT crop.

"The Roundup Ready crop germinated about two days quicker than the TT and it has grown a hell of a lot faster," he said.

"That's mainly due to the fact it's a hybrid and you get a lot more vigour with a hybrid than you do with the TT."

Duncan said the GM canola was also a lot leafier than the other crop, which had helped choke out any late post-emergent weeds.

Though he is impressed with the crop so far, Duncan does not see GM canola as a panacea for canola growers.

## Fast facts

**WHO:** Duncan Young

**WHERE:** Beverley

**WHAT:** GM canola trial



Duncan Young is trialling GM canola on his farm this year, planting Pacific Seeds' 601 and 502 varieties