



Sydney Morning Herald
Monday 3/08/2009

Page: 23
Section: Business News
Region: Sydney, AU
Circulation: 212700
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 107.42 sq.cms.



slice
slicemedia.com

press clip

GM canola pulls the big dollars in Canada

■ **GRAINS**
Philip Hopkins

GENETICALLY modified canola has become Canada's most valuable crop, is poised for more growth, and is testimony to the country's innovation policy, according to a visiting Canadian grains executive.

Dennis Stephens, from the Canada Grains Council, said GM canola was introduced in Canada in 1995 as part of a government innovation policy. Since then, the area sown has expanded from 4 million hectares to almost 6 million hectares.

In the same time wheat has declined from about 12 million hectares to just under 8 million hectares.

"GM canola is often Canada's most valuable crop and has re-

placed wheat," Mr Stephens told the Australian Grains Conference in Melbourne.

"Why the emphasis on innovation? Geography and climate are restrictions on industry."

Mr Stephens said the three main prairie provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, produced about 80 per cent of Canada's grain, but were a long way from export ports.

He said Canada's Canola Council estimated canola production would rise from 9.1 million tonnes in 2006 to 15 million tonnes by 2015.

Higher yields would be an important contributor. They were expected to rise from 277 kilograms per hectare in 2006 to

367 kilograms per hectare in 2015. Oil content would also increase.

Mr Stephens said that while 90 per cent of the current crop was regular canola and only 10 per cent was dedicated to "designer" products, this would change to a ratio of 75:25 within six years.

The downward trend in Canadian wheat was due to economic changes and the increasing use of GM technology in canola, soybeans and corn.

Mr Stephens said GM wheat was "not on the table" in Canada, but it was in the back of the mind of the working group involved in crop research.