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# GM lines boost yields

Lara Ladyman

South Australia's ban on transport of genetically modified seed means that if the controversial canola is given the green light for full production in WA all seed will be bought in by air, by sea or by truck through the Northern Territory.

Anyone caught breaching South Australia's ban on either transporting or growing GM canola faces penalties of up to \$200,000.

The seed companies are not deterred by these arrangements and are raring to go if the WA Agriculture Minister Terry Redman gives the nod.

However, should a decision not be made until February, 2010, calls have been made for a staged introduction and a cap on area to meet stewardship requirements.

Pioneer canola product manager Kevin Morthorpe said that if there was a delay in making a decision on a commercial release in WA, then it would be better if the area of GM was

restricted, possibly to around 20,000 hectares, to enable time for farmers and agronomists to be trained and paddock assessments to be made to ensure proper stewardship of the technology.

The company has five new GM Roundup Ready hybrids in National Variety Testing this season but Mr Morthorpe said none of these would be released on the basis of one year of testing, and especially because data would only be available from two of four RR NVT sites in WA this year.

There will however be seed of the mid-season variety, Pioneer RR hybrid 46Y20, which is growing at five farmer sites in WA this year — Kendenup, Frankland, Manypeaks, South Stirling and Mt Barker, as well as the NVT sites. Mr Morthorpe added that more than 90 per cent of the early adoption plantings of RR in the east had been in high rainfall areas and his expectation was that a similar pattern would be followed in

the west.

Pacific Seeds has three new GM RR hybrids varieties in the pipeline.

Pacific Seeds WA territory manager Nick Joyce said the yield advantage of these new lines was the order of 15 to 25 per cent over the Hyola 601 RR and Hyola 502 RR varieties in the field in WA this year. Pacific Seeds' RR varieties can be found at Cunderdin, Quairading, Beverley, Kojonup and York this season.

Wallace Cowling of Canola Breeders is also optimistic about the prospects of GM canola, adding that there would be limited seed of CBWA's first GM variety CHYB-166, for 2010.

CHYB-166 RR is in the Roundup Ready NVT trials in WA this year and is also growing in the field at Brookton and Cunderdin.

Professor Cowling added that hybrid varieties were outperforming open pollinated varieties by 25 per cent.



Canola Breeders WA plant breeder Cameron Beeck among the company's new genetically modified Roundup Ready hybrid