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Genetically modified wheat welcomed

The South Australian Farmers Federation Grains Industry Committee has welcomed the announcement from Monsanto that it will renew efforts to develop genetically modified (GM) wheat.

"If South Australian growers are going to be able to adapt to the predicted worsening climatic conditions, new grain varieties that can tolerate drought are needed urgently," said Mr Michael Schaefer, Chair of SAFF Grains.

"Together with Canadian and American grower organisations, through the Grains Council of Australia, SAFF Grains has endorsed the commercialisation of biotechnology in wheat.

"Currently the University of Adelaide is conducting trials on wheat and barley that has been genetically modified for enhanced drought, boron and abiotic stress tolerance.

"If these trials are successful, it is important that commercialisation follow.

"Of course we still need the State Government to get in line with the other States and allow GM crops to be grown.

"South Australian farmers need to be allowed the choice of whether they grow GM crops if they are to remain competitive with other Australian farmers." Mr Schaefer said.