

Roundup Ready canola set to soar

As Roundup Ready canola enters its second full commercial season in Victoria and NSW, **Peter O'Keeffe**, country lead for Monsanto, says his team is gearing up for significant growth in 2010 and 2011.



Peter O'Keeffe

"Roundup Ready canola is poised to become a major part of the winter cropping landscape as Australian growers experience the short and longer term benefits of the technology," he said.

"In Canada, growers have enjoyed cultivating GM canola for over a decade and today 93% of Canadian farmers choose to plant GM varieties.

"What's even more exciting about this statistic is that we believe Australian growers have more to gain than their Canadian counterparts due to the inherent yield drag of the triazine tolerant varieties that currently dominate in Australian broadacre cropping."

Initially, growers adopt Roundup Ready canola for the obvious short term advantages such as ease of use, up to 20% yield gains and higher oil content. However a recent Canadian study has surprisingly found that it is the longer term rotational benefits that drive repeat purchases of GM canola.

"So the sooner Australian growers introduce Roundup Ready canola into their program, the sooner they can start experiencing the benefits and share in the excitement of other Roundup Ready canola growers both here and around the world," Mr O'Keeffe said.

More encouraging information was recently released from a study conducted by Curtin University in Western Australia.

Monsanto Australia regional business manager **Tony May**, who has led the company's canola business since the first limited commercial release in 2008, said it was pleasing to see an Australian study that confirms what Monsanto already knew internally.

"This research shows Roundup Ready canola is more profitable and less impactful environmentally than the other canola systems currently used in Australia that rely on harsh residual herbicides," he said.

Monsanto distributor network appointed for 2010

"We have put a great deal of effort into identifying distribution outlets



Tony May

that can best support our technology," Mr May said.

"A network of Roundup Ready technology service providers (TSP) has been hand-picked throughout the canola belt to service the second wave of innovative growers who are making the switch to GM canola this season."

Mr O'Keeffe said it is Monsanto's intention to establish long term TSP in 2010-11 and reward those who support the Roundup Ready technology during the adoption phase with a semi-exclusive position in the long term.

"I encourage agronomically strong, service-based distributors to get involved in 2010 so they don't risk



Roundup Ready canola.

missing the opportunity to become a TSP," he said.

"Once we establish our TSP network we intend to stick with them."

Monsanto already has plans for the introduction of second and third

generation canola traits in Australia. This strong pipeline of technology will ensure that canola growers reap the rewards of embracing GM technology for many seasons to come. ■

MONSANTO 'COMPANY OF THE YEAR'

Forbes Magazine has named Monsanto as its Company of the Year for 2009.

The award is based on Monsanto's increase in sales over the past five years and average return on capital. But this success is only valued if customers – in this case growers – are able to share in the benefits.

Globally, one million growers are adopting biotech crops each year. In 2009 there were thirteen million growers who had planted 125 million hectares of these crops worldwide, with a global market value of approximately \$US8.3 billion.

Monsanto believes its pipeline of products offers the next wave of benefits for growers and consumers alike. Omega 3 in soybeans, healthier oils, and drought tolerance and nitrogen efficiency in crops will be in the next generation of biotechnology.

Monsanto CEO **Hugh Grant** said the new generation of biotech crops will go beyond herbicide tolerance and pest killing to help feed the world.

"There is a bigger demand for food than ever," he said.

"There is no new farmland. The business model is you provide more yield to growers and you are rewarded for that.

"By marrying conventional breeding with genetic engineering, Monsanto aims to produce more food for less money on the same amount of land.

"Conventional breeding – these days a high tech matchmaking process guided by DNA sequencing machines – will help boost maximum yields. Biotech genes will ensure that pests, weeds, drought and other problems don't destroy a crop's potential."

Monsanto is also committed to sustainable agriculture and, while Forbes Magazine focused on projected profits and Monsanto's commitment to double profits by 2012, Mr Grant said Monsanto is dually focused on sustainable yield and improving farmers' lives through the benefits of biotechnology.

Australian growers have themselves been benefiting from Monsanto's biotechnology in cotton for thirteen years. In 2008 Victorian and NSW growers also adopted Roundup Ready canola and have quickly experienced the benefits of increased yield, excellent weed control and higher oil content as well as reduced tillage.

"These advances mean Australian growers can remain competitive in global markets while reaping the benefits of truly game-changing and more sustainable technology," Mr Grant said.

