



# **GM Cropwatch**

## **Summary of GM contamination incidents and their consequences in Australia**

**“All GM crops are carefully regulated and managed as part of a program. It is not unusual practice for windrowed canola, conventional or GM, to blow in windy conditions. This was understood by the regulators when they granted GM canola approval to be grown,”<sup>1</sup> said Monsanto’s public affairs manager.**

### **Identifying GM canola weeds**

**GM canola weed contamination** is only documented and dealt with where vigilant farmers, GM Cropwatch, or Departments of Agriculture look for it and test. Test kits, and the locations of GM farms and GM receival silos, are essential for identifying GM weeds.

**We call it “contamination”** because the right to farm GM-free must be protected. Non-GM farmers can market their grain at far higher prices per tonne than GM canola varieties and these premiums are worth protecting.

**Australian non-GM canola typically earns \$20-\$40/tonne premiums** as any excess after EU biofuel production can go directly into food or animal feed which has zero tolerance for GM. Dr Eady, post-retirement fellow, who led the CSIRO study says,

**“We’ve achieved a \$100 million per year premium for our farmers, given the extra \$20-\$40/tonne paid for Australian non-GM Australian canola.”<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Heard, G. An unwelcome blow-in, Stock and Land, 27 Nov 2008. <https://www.stockandland.com.au/story/3644183/an-unwelcome-blow-in/>

<sup>2</sup> Locke, S. Australian canola for European biodiesel emits half the greenhouse gas of fossil fuels, ABC Rural, 19 December 2017. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-12-18/australian-canola-approved-as-low-emission-fuel-for-europe/9269232>

**A “don’t look, don’t find” approach** is inappropriate for identifying and managing GM contamination. There are many reputational and financial disincentives for farmers to look for GM contamination on their properties.

**“Wimmera grain growers pressured to stay silent on GM contamination: Bob Mackley”**  
news story below:

## Removal

**Farmers, and GM Cropwatch volunteers** have spent their own time removing countless GM canola weed infestations. This weed removal has not been quantified in monetary terms but would result in a substantial bill. But to whom should that bill be addressed - The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator; State-based Agriculture departments; The Federal Agriculture Department; Private land-holders; Local councils and Roads Departments, which share the cost of weed eradication on road verges?

**The lack of a “chain of responsibility”** means responsibility is shuffled between departments, which generally results in institutional indifference and inaction. Local councils, if they accept responsibility, need to fund and store herbicides other than Roundup as glyphosate-based herbicides do not control GM canola. Responsibility for GM canola eradication should have been decided before GM canola was commercialised in 2008 (Vic and NSW) and 2009 (WA).

## Solutions

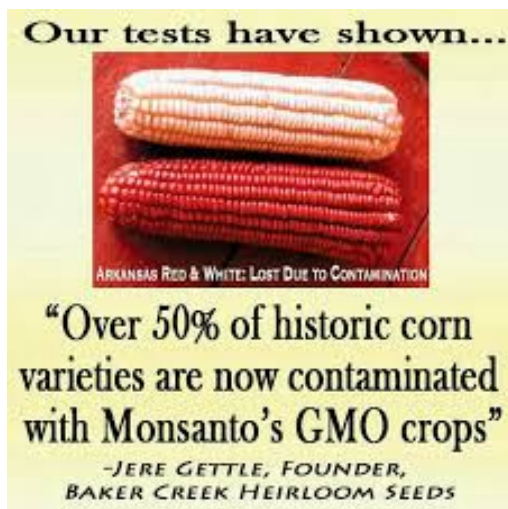
**A mandated chain of responsibility for GM** contamination site remediation must be established. Then the Farmer Protection Fund can receive applications from landholders, councils, transport companies and any others suffering pure economic loss or other harm from the release of GM crops and other organisms.

**A GRAIN report on Global GM contamination is attached. More details of GM contamination incidents are here.<sup>3</sup> Global GM contamination is also tracked here.<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> GM Cropwatch Resources. <http://www.gmcropwatch.org.au/resources>

<sup>4</sup> GM Contamination Register, Greenpeace and GMWatch UK. <http://www.gmcontaminationregister.org/>



**GM Cropwatch team gather and test GM canola weeds.**

Incident of GM Contamination	Date	Location	Impacts	Responsibility for Decontamination	Costs incurred
Terry Enwright	28/3/18	Mt Barker	GM canola has blown from 3 neighbours properties onto Mr Enwright's farm, on multiple occasions. <a href="https://thewest.com.au/business/agriculture/drifting-gm-canola-causes-no-problems-ng-b88787326z">https://thewest.com.au/business/agriculture/drifting-gm-canola-causes-no-problems-ng-b88787326z</a>	Unknown	Not assessed.
Darren West MP, WA	10/12/15	CBH Avon Silo, Northam	Darren West, Labor MLC for the Agricultural Region, shared his GM contamination experience in a member's statement after a load of canola he delivered was contaminated during sampling at the CBH Avon site. He was told to dump his contaminated load on the GM canola stack but was still paid the non-GM premium price for the load. The cost of the premium lost would be shared among all CBH members, he was told. <a href="http://www.farmweekly.com.au/news/agriculture/agribusiness/general-news/premium-paid-for-contaminated-canola-load/2749430.aspx">http://www.farmweekly.com.au/news/agriculture/agribusiness/general-news/premium-paid-for-contaminated-canola-load/2749430.aspx</a>	Workers at CBH Avon site	Not assessed as Darren West was paid non-GM premium price for his contaminated canola.
Ian and Jodi James, WA	28/11/11	Cunderdin, WA	13 positive results for GM canola found on their non-GM canola farm. Three of the positives tests were found on the James' land, up to 20 metres into the paddock. <a href="https://www.gmwatch.org/en/latest-listing/1-news-items/13521-gm-contamination-concerns-spiralling-in-australia">https://www.gmwatch.org/en/latest-listing/1-news-items/13521-gm-contamination-concerns-spiralling-in-australia</a>	Unknown. WA Ag Dept did no follow-up monitoring in following years.	Not assessed as farmers removed weeds.

Bob Mackley, VIC	Jan 2011	Bob Mackley's property, Duchembeg arra	Flood washed GM canola swathes onto neighbouring property. Farmer suspects this happened in a number of cases. (See below) <a href="https://www.mailtimes.com.au/story/1824365/wimmera-grain-growers-pressured-to-stay-silent-on-gm-contamination-bob-mackley/">https://www.mailtimes.com.au/story/1824365/wimmera-grain-growers-pressured-to-stay-silent-on-gm-contamination-bob-mackley/</a>	Anticipated natural event	Not assessed as farmer removed GM weeds
GM-Free Farmers test roadsides, WA	21/10/15	Mundaring, Kewdale, Mandogalup (near Kwinana) & Maddington	Members of the GM-Free Farmers Group found growing on road verges at 5 sites in metropolitan Perth. <a href="https://thewest.com.au/countryman/news/gm-free-canola-market-at-risk-ng-ya-130970">https://thewest.com.au/countryman/news/gm-free-canola-market-at-risk-ng-ya-130970</a>	Local councils. No action taken.	Unknown. Potential cost of stronger herbicides.
GM canola grew in vetch, NSW	10/9/15	Berrigan	Gai Marshall found GM weeds growing in her vetch crop. <a href="http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-09-10/nsw-canola-gm-warning-10-september-2015/6765468">http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2015-09-10/nsw-canola-gm-warning-10-september-2015/6765468</a>	Contamination event.	Unknown.
Truck Spill #1, WA	10/8/11	Williams, WA	15 tonnes of GM canola was spilled onto the Albany Highway near Williams after a fire broke out in the vehicle's undercarriage, melting a hole in its trailer. The spill was 500 metres from a non-GM canola farm, marketing to Japan. The CBH Group stated that a professional waste removal company was employed to clean up the spill. <a href="http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/gm-grain-contamination-fears-in-wa/news-story/c7148eee6d68312537d4b8e0f8de9b98">http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/gm-grain-contamination-fears-in-wa/news-story/c7148eee6d68312537d4b8e0f8de9b98</a>	Contamination event. CBH employed company for clean-up.	Unknown.
Truck Spill #2, WA	28/3/14	Cheyne Beach, Albany	A truck carrying GM canola overturned and spilled around 30 tonnes of the grain <a href="http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2014-03-28/south-coast-gm-canola-spill/5353302">http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2014-03-28/south-coast-gm-canola-spill/5353302</a>	Contamination event. Transport contractor cleaned up & CBH assisted.	Unknown.
GM canola near GM receival silo, VIC	2/10/13	Horsham	4/4 canola plants tested on roadside near Graincorp's Lubeck silo were GM canola. <a href="https://www.mailtimes.com.au/story/1814386/rogue-gm-canola-found-on-wimmera-roadside-plants/">https://www.mailtimes.com.au/story/1814386/rogue-gm-canola-found-on-wimmera-roadside-plants/</a>	Contamination event.	Unknown Potential cost to council of stronger herbicides.
Roadside canola weeds, WA	20/9/11	Esperance region	WA Conservation Council's "Citizen Science Survey" found GM canola plants growing on the edges of major roads in the Esperance region. 2% of the volunteer plants were found to be GM, although GM crops were less than 8% of the 2011 harvest. <a href="http://ccwa.org.au/media/gm-canola-genie-already-out-bottle">http://ccwa.org.au/media/gm-canola-genie-already-out-bottle</a>	Contamination event.	Unknown. Potential cost to council of stronger herbicides.

Roadside canola weeds, WA	6/10/12	Williams	Follow-up testing by WA CC on Albany Highway forum more GM canola weeds.	Contamination event.	Unknown.
Steve & Sue Marsh, WA	Oct 2010	Kojunup	Windrowed canola spread seeds onto adjacent property. This case is well documented and led to legal action. <a href="http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-03/organic-farmer-steve-marsh-loses-gm-appeal/6746108">http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-03/organic-farmer-steve-marsh-loses-gm-appeal/6746108</a>	Anticipated natural event	\$85,000 claim, not awarded.
GM canola mixed in non-GM canola silo, VIC	17/12/09	Dunolly, Lillimur	GM canola mistakenly delivered to Graincorp non-GM silos in Western Victoria. Each silo received five tonnes of GM canola in a 500 tonne sample. <a href="http://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-12-17/gm-canola-found-in-silos/1181672">http://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-12-17/gm-canola-found-in-silos/1181672</a>	Contamination event.	Unknown.
Honey contaminated, VIC	2/10/09	Bannockburn	Scientific testing on behalf of Greenpeace Australia found Monsanto's "Roundup Ready" canola in Edmonds Honey hives near Bannockburn. <a href="https://www.gmwatch.org/en/?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=11558:uproar-as-gm-canola-contaminates-beehives">https://www.gmwatch.org/en/?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=11558:uproar-as-gm-canola-contaminates-beehives</a>	Anticipated natural event.	Unknown.
Roadside GM canola, NSW	22/8/09	Berrigan	GM canola plants found growing along the Riverina Highway. 19 of 20 plants along a 20 km stretch of road were GM canola. Plants may have germinated from GM canola seed spilt on the way to the Finley GM receival silo. <a href="http://www.smh.com.au/environment/gm-canola-found-outside-containment-area-20090924-g4s9.html">http://www.smh.com.au/environment/gm-canola-found-outside-containment-area-20090924-g4s9.html</a>	Contamination event, spill during transport.	Farmer & GM Cropwatch removal. Potential cost to council of stronger herbicides.
Canola windrows spread seed, VIC	27/11/08	Horsham	GM Cropwatch found windrowed GM canola plants had blown up to 74 metres along the road adjacent to the GM canola crop. Monsanto's response: "It is not unusual practice for windrowed canola, conventional or GM, to blow in windy conditions. This was understood by the regulators when they granted GM canola approval to be grown." <a href="http://sl.farmonline.com.au/news/state/grains-and-cropping/general/an-unwelcome-blowin/1371915.aspx">http://sl.farmonline.com.au/news/state/grains-and-cropping/general/an-unwelcome-blowin/1371915.aspx</a>	Anticipated natural event.	Unknown.
Seed contamination, VIC	6/10/05	Horsham	"Grace" non-GM canola seed tested and found to be 0.5 % GM contamination. <a href="http://web.archive.org/web/20140401030933/http://www.non-gm-farmers.com/news_details.asp?ID=2695">http://web.archive.org/web/20140401030933/http://www.non-gm-farmers.com/news_details.asp?ID=2695</a>	Contamination event from Bayer (was Aventis) Topas 19/2 GM canola trials.	Contaminated seed, not compensated

Tasmanian GM canola trials contaminate 57 sites. Approval required site containment and cleanup.	90's to present	Tasmania	Monsanto and Aventis (now Bayer CropScience) had field trials of GM canola at 57 sites in Tasmania in the late 1990s and 2000. In 2008, "volunteer" canola plants were found at 12/53 sites. In 2014, 3 sites of 53 inspected still had GM canola weeds. Audit reports here: <a href="http://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/product-integrity/gene-technology/former-gm-canola-trial-sites-audit-reports">http://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/product-integrity/gene-technology/former-gm-canola-trial-sites-audit-reports</a>	Incidental contamination from Monsanto/Bayer failure of managed containment.	Tasmanian Government paid for monitoring and clean-up. <b>Cost?</b>
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Bob Mackley with GM canola seeds in 2011. Picture: AMY PYSDE

Wimmera Mail Times, October 7, 2013

## Wimmera grain growers pressured to stay silent on GM contamination: Bob Mackley

A DUCHEMBEGARRA farmer believes Wimmera grain growers are being pressured to stay silent on genetically modified crop contamination.

Bob Mackley's paddocks were contaminated by a neighbour's GM canola during the January 2011 floods.

Mr Mackley said other Wimmera farmers' paddocks had also been contaminated.

"There have been quite a few farms around the Wimmera contaminated, but most people have not said anything and just swallowed it," he said.

"To some degree it is peer pressure because there is a fear farmers who do speak up might not get a fair hearing.

"That is not going to change any time soon, although people certainly should be able to talk about their points of view without fear.

"Country communities are under enough pressure without this sort of device issue."

The comments come after rogue traces of genetically modified canola were discovered on roadside plants near Lubeck on Tuesday.

Mr Mackley said agriculture's biotech industry was portraying itself as 'the one sector to save agriculture and feed the world'.

He has called for the Federal Government to tighten labelling laws so consumers know they are buying GM products.

"It has been a one-way trip since it was introduced and we are now in the world of GM foods," he said.

"Food products derived from GM should be clearly labelled in a way people can easily understand so they can decide whether to buy it.

"Some people don't want to eat it or feed it to their children but they can't easily do that because it is not labelled.

"There is certainly more awareness out there now and because the biotech industry isn't telling us where their products are, the level of trust is diminishing."

Mr Mackley said GM canola also impacted food producers outside the grain industry.

"Canola is fairly dependant on pollinators – bees – but the quality end of the honey industry, especially in Europe, won't accept GM products," he said.

"There is no mechanism for beekeepers to tell where GM canola is so they can't avoid it and have to take pot luck."

<https://www.mailtimes.com.au/story/1824365/wimmera-grain-growers-pressured-to-stay-silent-on-gm-contamination-bob-mackley/>