

PRESS RELEASE

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PO Box 768
Stirling SA 5152 Australia

Tel +61 08 8370 8455
Fax +61 08 8370 8381
Email enquiries@nasaa.com.au
Web www.nasaa.com.au

NASAA RESPONSE TO WA GM CONTAMINATION

It is with some regret that NASAA is in a position to confirm recent speculation that one of our longstanding WA growers, Steve Marsh, has recently been the victim of GM contamination despite his best efforts to avoid it.

Following confirmation that the GM canola plants have indeed contaminated Steve Marsh's certified organic farm from a neighboring property, NASAA has been left with little option than to decertify the affected portion of his farm (325ha's) until it can be demonstrated that these areas are GM free.

For future certification to be regained on the affected land it will require complete removal of all contaminating GM canola and proven evidence that there will be no more germination of such plants as a result of this contamination. As a result of Steve's organic status being compromised and withdrawn across the contaminated areas for an indefinite period, he will effectively be unable to market produce from these areas as certified organic until a complete clean up has occurred if this is possible.

Stephanie Goldfinch, Executive Officer of NASAA Certified Organic (NCO) (NASAA's certification subsidiary), said:

“Certified organic farmers are subject to more scrutiny than non organic. This demonstrates their commitment to the consumer, food safety and the environment to provide food that is organic and not genetically modified.”

NASAA certified organic produce has zero tolerance for GM content which is in line with the requirements of the National Standard for Organic & Bio-Dynamic Produce and the Australian National Organic Standard AS6000. This is to ensure the integrity and quality of NASAA organic produce for businesses and consumers alike.

Jan Denham, NASAA Chairman said today:

“The WA government should give full assistance to Mr Marsh to ensure that these GM plants are removed from his property as soon as possible so that he may have his certification status reassessed.

This issue highlights the risk to not only organic farmers but all farmers not wishing to grow GM plants on their farms. Greater protection is needed for those who do not wish to be involved with GM crops.

This occurrence clearly shows that farmers involved in growing GM crops need much stricter regulations and supervision to prevent future events.

NASAA is calling on the WA Government and the Minister to hold a full and open inquiry into this contamination with the results released as soon as possible”
End quote.

For further information or interviews contact:

Jan Denham, NASAA Chairman 03 50279249

David Silkstone
NASAA Communications Manager