

GM Cropwatch Report

90's to present : Tasmania

Field trials of genetically modified (GM) canola took place at 57 sites in Tasmania in the late 1990s and in 2000. The trials were conducted by Monsanto Australia and Aventis (now Bayer CropScience) The first audit of former GM canola sites occurred in spring 2001. Since then audits are approximately three times per year.

In 2008, “volunteer” canola plants were found at twelve sites of 53 sites.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) advises that canola seeds can stay viable for up to 16 years. The most recent Tasmanian Audit report was published in November 2012.

Read the Audit Reports here:

<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/CART-6795X9?open>

6-10-05: Canola seed contamination: Victoria

Geoffrey Carracher, who farms 1,200 hectares near Horsham in western Victoria, sent his “Grace” brand non-GM canola seed for testing and found it had 0.5 % GM contamination.

26th October 2005, The Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) announced acceptance of a GM tolerance level of 0.9% in marketed canola and an acceptance of 0.5% GM contamination in seed. Seed levels were to reduce to 0.1% within 2 years. Any state that adopts a GM-free status lower than these levels must be responsible for introducing a rigorous testing regime.

http://web.archive.org/web/20140401030933/http://www.non-gm-farmers.com/news_details.asp?ID=2695

25-11-08 First GM Canola contamination : Horsham, Victoria

GM Cropwatch found windrowed GM canola plants, lying in the paddock ready for harvest, had blown up to 74 metres along the road from the GM crop site. Monsanto responded by telling the media that GM canola contamination was “always expected and anticipated”.

The roadside is managed by Vic Roads, which has no protocols for organising decontamination. The Victorian DPI and Horsham Rural City Council were also not willing to be involved.

Faced with bureaucratic buck passing, local farmers met 2 days after the discovery and cleaned up the site, collecting the plants and using a vacuum cleaner to pick up seed that had spread from the split seed pods.

<http://sl.farmonline.com.au/news/state/grains-and-cropping/general/an-unwelcome-blowin/1371915.aspx>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/11/26/2429844.htm>

<http://sl.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/agribusiness-and-general/general/claims-of-gm-canola-contamination-in-vic/1369599.aspx>

17-9-09 Roadside GM canola : NSW

Farmer Gai Marshall found canola plants growing along the Riverina Highway near Berrigan NSW. Using test strips, she found 19 of 20 plants along a 20 km stretch of road were GM.

She believes the plants have taken root from canola spilled out of trucks on the way to the Finley GM receival silo, operated by Graincorp. Gai was not intending to grow GM canola and last year registered a GM-free status for the family property. On 22nd September, Gai Marshall and helpers pulled up as many roadside GM canola plants as possible, in an effort to stop germination of spilt GM canola seed, after rain or next season.

<http://www.smh.com.au/environment/gm-canola-found-outside-containment-area-20090924-g4s9.html>

1-10-09 GM canola pollen in honey : Geelong, Victoria

Greenpeace tested honey samples from hives adjacent to a GM crop at Bannockburn, near Geelong. The samples were found to contain Monsanto's Roundup Ready canola pollen.

http://www.gmwatch.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11558:uproar-as-gm-canola-contaminates-beehives

17-12-09 Genetically modified canola in non-GM silo : Dunolly, Victoria

GM canola was mistakenly delivered to non-GM silos in western Victoria at Dunolly and Lillimur. Each silo received five tonnes of GM canola in a 500 tonne sample.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2009-12-17/gm-canola-found-in-silos/1181672>

September 2010 to present - Steve Marsh's farm : Kojunup, WA

Steve Marsh's organic farm was decertified after he found GM canola spread over 2/3 of his property. His legal action against his GM-growing neighbour prompted widespread support for his case.

<http://safefoodfoundation.org/food-campaigns/genetically-modified-foods/projects/steve-marsh/>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-07-06/organic-certification-row-to-head-to-wa-court/4114336>

The Supreme Court Judgement on the case found against Steve Marsh

<http://safefoodfoundation.org/2014/05/28/press-release-gm-farmers-win-is-a-loss-for-all-organic-farmers/>

Steve Marsh has announced his intention to appeal the decision

<http://safefoodfoundation.org/2014/06/19/steve-marsh-to-appeal-gm-canola-contamination-case/>

18-3-11 Flood causes GM canola spread : Duchembegarra, Victoria

Grain farmer Bob Mackley confirmed GM canola contamination on his formerly GM-free farm. Bob was dismayed when he found that the floods had washed GM canola from his neighbour's paddocks onto his property.

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

10-8-11 Truck spill : Williams, WA

A truck spilled 15 tonnes of GM canola onto the Albany Highway near Williams, about 160km southeast of Perth after a fire broke out in the vehicle's undercarriage.

<http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/western-australia/canola-spill-sparks-gm-contamination-fears/story-e6frg13u-1226112606821>

28-3-14

A second GM canola truck spill, underlining the risks of GM contamination due to human error.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-28/south-coast-gm-canola-spill/5353302>

20-9-11 Citizens' Science Survey finds GM canola : Albany, WA

Western Australia's Conservation Council backs a "Citizen Science Survey". It finds fugitive canola plants growing on the edges of major roads in the Esperance region and demonstrates that road transport can spread genetically modified plants over vast areas. 2% of fugitive plants were found to be genetically modified, despite GM crops making up less than 8% of the 2011 harvest.

<http://ccwa.org.au/media/gm-canola-genie-already-out-bottle>

November 2011 Ian and Jodi James : Cunderdin WA

Independent tests confirmed GM canola contamination on their farm. The findings prompted demands that the department conduct thorough and rigorous testing of the James' land. Ian and Jodi found 13 positive results for GM canola on their non-GM canola farm.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/australia/en/mediacentre/media-releases/food/Independent-GM-canola-tests-confirm-contamination/>

<http://truefood.org.au/newsandevents/?news=149>

6-10-12 Citizens Science follow up on 2011 tests : WA

"An urgent clean-up of what is clearly now a GM Canola infestation is now required to ensure ongoing crop segregation in the Williams Shire. A thorough inquiry is also needed as to the effectiveness of the 2011 truck spill clean-up and the potential for unknown areas of contamination well away from the truck-spill site."

<http://ccwa.org.au/media/genetically-modified-time-bomb-found-albany-highway>

10-9-15 GM canola weeds in NSW

Riverina farmer warns others after GM canola weeds are found in her 600acre vetch paddock.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-10/nsw-canola-gm-warning-10-september-2015/6765468>

21-10-15 WA GM-Free Farmers find more roadside weeds

GM-Free Farmers test 5 roadside sites near Perth, and find GM canola weeds. <https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/29861723/gm-free-canola-market-at-risk/>

29-4-16 GM canola bags blow along a road in Western Australia

GM canola seed bags, containing a small amount of seed, were found blowing along a road in Goomalling shire. “These bags — for Roundup Ready canola — could result in GM canola contamination of roadside verges and possible non-GM farmers’ paddocks. This is completely irresponsible behaviour by some GM farmers,” said Ms Copeland from the GM Free farmers.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/countryman/a/31469388/stray-gm-crop-bags-found-on-road/>