



**GRAIN
PRODUCERS SA**
The voice of South Australian growers

GM CROPS

GROWER FACT SHEET - NOVEMBER 2020

Key Points

- The ban on the commercial cultivation of genetically modified crops has been lifted across mainland SA.
- Restrictions on the commercial cultivation of GM crops will continue to apply on Kangaroo Island indefinitely.
- The lifting of the moratorium provides certainty for the industry in time for the 2021 season.
- Growers are strongly encouraged to undertake GM crop accreditation courses offered by technology providers. These courses cover details on agronomic management and stewardship obligations. They must be completed before growers can access GM varieties.
- This decision is the culmination of years of advocacy by GPSA and the broader industry.

When was the moratorium lifted?

The decision to lift the GM moratorium across mainland SA was announced by the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development on 2 November 2020.

This followed laws passed by the South Australian Parliament to allow GM food crops to be cultivated in SA, except on Kangaroo Island, in May 2020. Councils were given a once-off opportunity to apply to the Minister to be recognised as an area where no GM food crops can be grown. Applications could only be considered on trade and marketing grounds.

The statutory six month window for councils to apply to remain GM-free has now closed. No mainland councils were designated by the Minister as non-GM food crop areas under the Act, following a recommendation by the GM Crops Advisory Committee. This means the commercial cultivation of GM crops approved by the OGTR is now lawful across mainland SA.

You can review background to this legislative change on the GPSA website.

When will Kangaroo Island be able to access GM technology?

Under this legislation, Kangaroo Island's GM-free status will be enshrined in the Act and can only be removed or altered by a further act of Parliament.

GPSA firmly believes all primary producers deserve the freedom to choose the varieties that best fit their farming system and will continue to advocate for further legislative change to enable KI growers access to GM technology.

I would like to grow GM crops - what do I do now?

Grain producers on mainland SA looking to include GM varieties as part of their 2021 rotation should first speak to their agronomist and preferred seed supplier.

In order to access GM seed varieties, producers will need to comply with a License and Stewardship Agreement.

This agreement outlines in detail the trait, stewardship and commercial obligations to be adhered to when working with GM technologies, in addition to satisfying conditions of the relevant Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) licenses.

There are other requirements to ensure the responsible use of GM technology, which may include:

- Allowing the technology provider and the OGTR to collect information in relation to a GM product and provide information sufficient to identify paddocks where a GM product is being cultivated;
- Informing the technology provider if there are any unintended or adverse consequences from the use of a GM product; and
- Allowing the technology provider to collect samples and inspect equipment for three years after planting a GM product.

Breaches of the agreements may lead to producers being denied a future license to grow a GM product and may entitle a technology provider to take out an injunction requiring the producer to destroy the GM product.

Is segregation of non-GM canola possible?

Industry segregation protocols to facilitate the successful coexistence of both GM and non-GM production systems in the market are well established.

Coexistence is not a new concept; South Australian farmers and the grain industry have practised coexistence for generations to meet demands for different types of products.

Breeders and farmers are accustomed to breeding and producing different crops alongside each other, such as bread and noodle wheat, or feed and malting barley.

We know GM crops coexist with food and wine production systems interstate, including certified organic or biodynamic systems. There is no evidence to suggest SA will be any different.

SA's predominant grain handler and marketer, Viterra, has advised GPSA that:

“Viterra’s position has always been that we can support the choice to grow GM crops by providing handling and quality management expertise and processes to meet the market requirements of handling and segregating both GM and non-GM commodities.

Viterra’s approach to managing GM commodities will be consistent with our commitment to ensuring South Australian grain meets the requirements of end users, both domestically and internationally. Viterra has maintained its ISO 22000 certification for more than 20 years, the highest certification of any grain supply chain in Australia. Viterra’s \$3 million purpose built grain laboratory opened in 2018 helps maintain our international accreditation standards and retain valuable export markets for SA grain.”

What standards will apply for non-GM canola?

Industry and government are jointly responsible for the introduction and maintenance of the 0.9% low-level presence industry threshold level which was set by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council in 2005 and applied nationwide.

On behalf of industry, the Australian Oilseed Federation (AOF) determines the threshold tolerances for approved GM canola from non-GM canola in the grain supply chain, using the Ministerial Council decision as the basis for coexistence.

The AOF Standards Manual contains the quality and technical standards for the Australian oilseeds industry and the supporting methods of analysis, including non-GM standards used by the grain trade. These trading standards are revised annually, and proposed changes and draft standards are made available for industry consultation.

How will GPSA support the introduction of GM crops?

GPSA recognises that responsible stewardship of GM technology is critical moving forward.

Strong stewardship protocols are already implemented through commercial License and Stewardship agreements between technology providers and producers, as well as in-crop management and resistance management plans developed by technology providers.

Growers will be required to successfully complete a GM accreditation course administered by the technology provider prior to signing a License and Stewardship Agreement.

The course covers details on agronomic management and stewardship obligations. Upon completion, growers will receive a GM canola technical manual. GPSA will be rolling out an education campaign in advance of the 2021 season to help growers better understand the process and support coexistence.

Will GM food crops still be regulated in SA?

Yes. GM food crop varieties cannot be commercially cultivated in Australia until approval is given by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR). This is to ensure that GM varieties are as safe as their non-GM equivalents, with respect to both human health and the environment.

Trials of GM varieties are also regulated by the OGTR in the same scientific manner.

States may only regulate GM varieties for trade and marketing purposes. Reforms by the South Australian Parliament now allow GM food crops approved by the OGTR to be cultivated in SA, except on Kangaroo Island.

GM foods and ingredients for use in the food supply in Australia and New Zealand must be approved by Food Standards Australia New Zealand. All GM foods and ingredients (including food additives and processing aids) that contain novel DNA or novel protein must be labelled with the words ‘genetically modified’.

Resources

PIRSA has established an information portal for producers looking to understand how to access GM crops, or for information on coexistence principals.

Further industry information is available on the GPSA website.

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