



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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KIMBERLEY
INC

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 14th November

Foolish GM Cotton decision jeopardises future of the Kimberley

Environs Kimberley (EK) has condemned today's decision by the state Government to lift the moratorium on commercially growing GM cotton in the Ord, claiming that it places the Kimberley environment and community health at great risk.

Environs Kimberley freshwater campaigner, Dr Gary Scott, said, "This is a foolhardy decision on the part of the new state government. Once GM cotton is introduced on a commercial scale into the Ord the consequences are irreversible - the Kimberley will lose its clean, green reputation and the state's agricultural trading markets will be put at risk."

Recently the Conservation Council of Western Australia presented Agriculture Minister Terry Redman with petitions signed by over 27 000 people who want to keep Western Australia GM Free. The Minister told over 1000 people at an anti-GM rally at parliament house that he would listen to the views of the community before making any decision.

Dr Scott said, "By taking this decision now, within only a couple of months of taking office, the Barnett Government has demonstrated that it is not keen to listen to community concerns".

Cotton is a crop that is extremely intensive in chemical and water use and the experience with GM cotton in other countries has shown that the use of pesticides is not reduced substantially as claimed. There are numerous pests and fungal diseases that can afflict GM cotton in the Kimberley's challenging tropical environment – the gene that is inserted into the cotton will only control for one pest.

"There are still far too many uncertainties surrounding this technology", said Dr Scott.

"GM cotton will end up in the food chain and in our food supply. The majority of cottonseed is pressed for oil and is used extensively as an ingredient in margarines and cooking oils. Cotton meal is also fed to cattle."

"Residents of the Kimberley should be very concerned that the cotton industry will use this decision to renew its push for GM cotton to be introduced into other areas of the region as well. This can not be allowed to happen – the pathway that the state government has now gone down leads us entirely in the wrong direction."

"The state government should be promoting sustainable forms of agriculture, not this corporate-dominated form of production that places us all at risk", concluded Dr Scott

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