



Western Graingrowers

New WGG Chairman

John Snooke was elected chairman of Western Graingrowers at the AGM held on 8 April. Outgoing chairman, Rick Wilson, was praised by committee members and PGA President Rob Gillam for his tireless efforts to promote the free market principles upon which PGA is founded.

Rick thanked the committee members for their support during his leadership tenure, and pledged his support for John as he continues his membership of the WGG committee.

GM Producers' Defence Fund

PGA's establishment of a defence fund was successful in providing the support Michael and Zante Baxter needed to stand up to the bullies of the green movement.

To date, all the threats of Stephen Marsh's lawyer have been just that. No legal filings have eventuated, and the Baxters have seeded double the amount of GM canola this year as last.

We are proud of the Baxters, and proud of the role PGA played in standing up strongly on the side of right. Congratulations, growers!

The Defence Fund now stands ready to support others who find themselves under attack while having done nothing wrong.

National Grower Register (NGR)

Farmer participation in NGR is not mandatory. Growers may choose to not respond without fear of recourse. The NGR is effectively the non-CBH trade attempting to get a feel for the WA grain market, since data collected by CBH is not shared with marketers.

CBH Structure

The EGM at which the "new" CBH structure was approved is being touted by CBH as a general approval of the structure of the business.

Members must know that there was never a real choice presented, and so debate and vote on this topic was non-existent.

It is unfortunate that farmer equity that exists in CBH was not accessible in one of the toughest years on record.

ACCC Grain Express Decision

ACCC has revoked CBH's exclusive dealing notification on Grain Express. The final decision was handed down on 29 June.

This does not remove Grain Express or prevent CBH from operating a bundled service. It only removes the forced nature of the bundling. Growers and marketers will still have the choice of whether to use the freight services provided by CBH.

PGA welcomes this announcement, as we deem it the first step in the provision of competitive services in grain logistics in Western Australia.

Gene Technology Act (2000) Review

A copy of our submission can be obtained by contacting Janet Thompson on 0417 815 595 or mmattjanet@westnet.com.au, or the office.

We submitted that:

The weight of evidence demonstrates that the risk of GM crops posing serious risks to human health and safety is close to zero, and that, contrary to damaging it, the use of GM crops allows us to better care for our environment.

Recent news reports of over 30 deaths in Germany, likely due to the consumption of contaminated organic bean sprouts, highlight very real risks of food safety.

While this hard evidence of real problems that currently affect human health and the economy exists, there appears to be disproportionate oversight of GM technology where health and environmental problems have proved imaginary.

From 1996 to 2010, a 15 year time period, the world's farmers grew over a billion hectares of GM crops. At the same time, no human deaths or illnesses due to consumption or use of GM products have been reported.

Our submission encouraged that the amount of regulatory oversight should be proportional to the amount of risk involved.

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