

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS - ANIMAL FEEDING TRIAL

**Hon KEN BASTON to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I refer to a media statement issued by the minister and dated 26 November 2005.

- (1) Has the long-term animal feeding trial referred to in that statement commenced?
- (2) If so, when was it commenced?
- (3) Over what period will the study be conducted?
- (4) What organisation is conducting the study?
- (5) Which species of animals are being fed genetically modified foods?
- (6) What GM foods are being fed to the animals involved in the study?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank Hon Ken Baston for providing some notice of the question.

- (1) Yes. The process is long, and it involves a number of stages.
- (2) The research commenced by developing the protocol for the research. This began more than a year ago, and was a very thorough process, hence it took approximately a year to complete. The draft protocol was then sent to 15 scientists in eight different countries to review, before being reviewed by a steering committee of 10 Australian experts. The research project is therefore one of the most highly scrutinised ever.
- (3) The GM seeds will be fed to laboratory animals for many months. Other animals will be fed non-GM seeds to act as a control. The results between the two groups will be compared. The results will be analysed and published in peer-reviewed scientific journals for everybody to see the research protocol, what was found in the research, and what it means. The process will be done properly and thoroughly, hence it will take time; that is, many months. This is a time-honoured, open and transparent approach to conducting scientific research.
- (4) The Institute of Health and Environmental Research Inc is a not-for-profit research institute with an interest in genetically modified organisms, particularly those destined for food. Its directors hold the following degrees: ordinary degrees in medicine, science and agriculture; honours degrees in agricultural science and organic chemistry; a master's degree in public health; and PhDs in plant genetics and medicine. The directors have training and expertise in animal feeding studies, plant science, agriculture, medicine, chemistry, biochemistry, nutrition, epidemiology and biostatistics.
- (5) Standard laboratory animals are being used. Different animals are being used for different aspects of the study. The details are the intellectual property of the independent research institute conducting the study.
- (6) GM foods that are currently in the Australian food supply, hence foods that Western Australians are currently eating.