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OILSEEDS NEWS

CANADIAN CANOLA AT FOREFRONT OF INNOVATION

The Canadian canola industry is still at the forefront of innovation, according to a leading researcher on his recent return from four months' work in Canada.

Principal Lecturer Dr Rob Norton of The University of Melbourne who worked at The University of Manitoba in Winnipeg said that over 90 per cent of canola in Canada is herbicide tolerant, of which 75 per cent is genetically modified.

"Farmer demand is clearly for herbicide-tolerant canola types and the few varieties available without specific herbicide tolerances are not widely grown," said Dr Norton.

Innovators: Rob Norton said that Canada leads the way for innovation in canola.

In fact, there have been no conventional canola types entered into the Canadian canola registration tests in recent years.

"The most popular varieties are Bayer Crop Science genetically-modified (GM) hybrids with Liberty Link tolerance", said Dr Norton.

"There are also Clearfield and Roundup types and there is a move to hybrids for all herbicide-tolerant types. About half of all canola varieties sown are hybrids, and hybrids have topped the regional testing results every year since 2000."

This season, about 5.2 million hectares of canola was grown in Canada, and production will be about 8 million tonnes. This compares with less than a million hectares sown in Australia.

Despite the lowest summer rainfall since 1961 in Winnipeg and some failed crops in western Saskatchewan, canola still performed very well for growers.

Dr Norton said that crush capacity is increasing with one new plant near Winnipeg commissioned by a local grain trader with a capacity of 840,000 tonnes annually.

This capacity follows strong market signals for both oil and meal from Canadian canola.