

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates May 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 41

**Division/Agency:** APD/GRDC – Agricultural Productivity Division/Grains Research and Development Corporation

**Topic:** Germplasm

**Proof Hansard Page:** 108 (24/05/2011)

**Senator Nash asked:**

**Mr Harvey:** This is the exact question that some of the developing countries have been asking, and that is the reason that there was this agreement to set up a fund—so that there would be something in it for the developing countries.

**Senator NASH:** Am I right then in saying that one of the main parts of it is for developed nations to assist developing nations? Or is it the other way around, or—

**Mr Harvey:** It is probably not as simple as that. I think the developed world is very dependent on being able to access material from all over the world. A lot of the areas that are particularly good areas in which to look for new variation in genetic material is some of the undeveloped world, so—

**Senator NASH:** So we do not want to take advantage of them by not having some sort of return in it for them.

**Mr Harvey:** Exactly—it needs to be a quid pro quo.

**Senator NASH:** You may not know this: how many countries contribute to the fund?

**Mr Harvey:** No, I would have to take that on notice. I would have to check to see that the fund is actually up and operating. I know that a number of countries have signed the treaty.

**Answer:**

As of March 2011, seven countries have contributed to the Treaty's benefit sharing fund. These countries are Spain, Italy, Australia, Ireland, Norway, Indonesia and Canada.

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**Senator Nash asked:**

**Mr Harvey:** We run a range of trials. The trials that we run—particularly with canola and the bulk of the trials that we run that have genetically modified crops in them—are the NBT national variety trials. We have a record of all those trials and we have a record of whether or not they have been involved in a flood. We can certainly get back to you and let you know if any of those trials were flooded.

**Senator NASH:** That would be really interesting. As a gross generalisation, I imagine that those running the trials would be the least likely to come and tell you that there had been an issue.

**Mr Perrett:** Under the management arrangements we have for those trials, they are obliged to report any instances that might affect the results, and certainly a flood would.

**Senator NASH:** To quite a significant degree, I would imagine. If you would supply the background information on that, that would be very useful.

**Answer:**

No GRDC National Variety Trail trials including genetically modified crops were flooded.