

Submission Cover Sheet

Review of the Moratorium on GM Canola

Submission Number: 188

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Date Received: 16 August 2007

Number of Pages: 2

Attachments Submitted with this Submission:

To obtain copies of these attachments please call the Review Panel Secretariat on
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16 AUG 2007

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GM Canola Review Panel Secretariat
 Department of Primary Industries
 Level 19, 1 Spring Street
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 Melbourne VIC
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Submission 188

CC: Premier John Brumby
 Fiona Richardson, State Member for Northcote

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Dear Members of the GM Canola Review Panel

The work you are currently doing is of the utmost importance – years, decades, or perhaps even centuries from now the ramifications of your decisions will be felt. There is nothing more important to the health and future of humanity than the food we eat and the way that our food is produced.

We are aware your current inquiry will not consider the impact of GM crops on human health – a situation akin to testing a new drug without taking the side effects into account since food is our best medicine! – we hope that in the future an in-depth public inquiry into this issue will be conducted before any decisions are made that may have such huge consequences for us all.

Some points we would like you to consider:

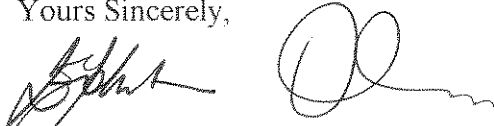
- Economically speaking we see many advantages for Victoria in remaining GM free. This approach to food production is still in its infancy, we are yet to see the real long term effects on our environment (consider the current crisis with the bee population in South America!), on agriculture and most importantly (but apparently irrelevant) on human and animal health.
- Why be one of the guinea pigs in this experiment when we can reap premium prices for our GM-free crops? (of up to A\$120/tonne for GM-free canola abroad ABARE, 2007). We can also avoid the billions of dollars lost to testing, identity preservation, segregation, handling, rejected shipments, some lost markets and lower confidence in Australia's clean, green, GM-free reputation for all foods.
- By differentiating our state as clean and GM-free we can maintain a competitive advantage over many other regions - we can sell our foods into all markets often at higher prices. A win-win that is currently demonstrated with Australia being the only seller of GM-free canola in the world and the only exporter who accessed all markets with a premium price! Why would we change that?
- Here in Victoria, we have a extremely healthy, burgeoning organic and biodynamic food industry that is enormous benefit to our economy, our environment and agricultural practices and our health. Introduction of GM crops would irrevocably threaten these.
- There is enormous cost associated with the proliferation of herbicide tolerant weeds which will occur with the introduction of "Roundup ready" GM canola.

Wild radish, turnip, charlock, ryegrass, and barnyard grass will become resistant to herbicides by outcrossing . This significant cost will be borne by everyone – farmers, parks authorities, councils, landcare, gardeners.

- Who owns our food? The giving of greater monopoly power and control and endless profits to two pharmaceutical companies who have no interest in a healthy public and no accountability is dangerous and negligent. An EU economic report shows Bayer and Monsanto benefit most from GM crops and foods.
- Finally, the marketing machines behind GM foods promise us healthier food, drought-resistant and salt tolerant crops etc but so far these are just promises and are a long way off commercialisation (Glover 2005, in Corish 2005)

As parents of young children and passionately interested in health and nutrition, the future of this technology and its impacts on our food supply and environment scares us – it simply has not proven its long-term (over generations of humans) safety. Once we go down this track there is no going back. We implore you to make the conservative and responsible decision to extend this ban to at least 2013.

Yours Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is more fluid and cursive, while the second signature on the right is more stylized and circular.

Elise Johnston & Terence Chadwick
Northcote