

Submission Cover Sheet

# Review of the Moratorium on GM Canola

**Submission Number:** 245

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**Date Received:** 3 September 2007

**Number of Pages:** 2

**Attachments Submitted with this Submission:**

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Sub 245



GM Canola Review Panel Secretariat

Department of Primary Industries

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Melbourne Vic 3001

Submission to the 2007 Review of the Moratorium on GE Canola

I am writing to you about the review of the moratorium on the commercial release of genetically engineered "GE" Canola in Victoria.

I am a mother of three concerned about the safety of GE crops to humans and the environment.

I call on the panel to recommend to the government to extend the moratorium until such time as the safety issues can be resolved.

I believe that to focus only on the trade impacts of growing GE Canola (and other GE crops) is to be extremely narrow, short sighted and negligent. Who is going to answer the basic safety questions if not an expert panel?

The State government relies on the Federal government for health and safety issues. The Federal government relies on the OGTR who relies on testing by company scientists. Remember tobacco companies telling us smoking was healthy? There is evidence Monsanto is suppressing evidence of the risks of GE technology. \*1 And a CSIRO report leaked to the ABC's Lateline on 16/3/04 found the Federal Gene Regulator (now OGTR) had assessed less than 50 of the 152 hazards associated with GE crops. Further, Monsanto's GE Corn, Mon 863, has been approved by FSANZ even though the company refused to give FSANZ its raw data on Mon 863 and even though others, eg France's Commission du Genie Biomoleculaire recommended it be banned.

GE Canola has been trialed in Victoria at numerous sites whilst moratoriums have been in place. GE trials have also taken place at different locations around Australia. What does any independent research say so far? What does any detailed technical review by the Department of Agriculture say?

What is the impact on insects and birds and soil (soil in Argentina is apparently almost inert now due to the overuse of herbicides and pesticides, farmers are also reporting health problems, as reported in New Scientist 17/04/04)? Biodiversity? Farm scale UK research shows GE crops have adverse impacts on natural environments. \*2 North American bees have virtually disappeared. Is anyone checking whether there is a GE connection? Mutations? What is the impact on rats or other animals fed these products? The CSIRO ended GE pea trials in 2005 after 10 years and \$3 million because the GE peas made rats sick. How do we know whether GE foods are making people sick when so much of it is unlabelled. Could the epidemic of food allergies we are having, as reported in the Age 18/6/07, be due to the introduction of genetically engineered organisms into our diets? The dates seem to coincide (approximately 10 years.) What does the research say? Is the research even being done? What about contamination of non GE crops? Farmers worldwide have reported their crops being tainted by stray GE pollen. Can GE and non GE crops be segregated from growth to market? Research seems to suggest it is impossible to keep GE and non GE crops separate. Will the government provide those farmers who want to be GE free with insurance? When consumers around the world are against this lack of choice why are governments and expert panels not listening? Ask the question "who benefits from GE crops?" Will the national government be able to determine national food production when the gene technology for food is concentrated in the hands of a few multinational agribusiness companies who obtain monopoly rights over seeds and entire species of plants? The so called "smart" crops developed to date are 1) resistant to herbicides 2) toxic to insects. Surely it is obvious those two traits are not going to be good for either humans or the environment?

We need scientific research to back GE approvals. The above questions must be answered satisfactorily by independent scientists before we have a lifting of the moratorium on the commercial release of GE crops. I urge the panel to recommend an extension of the moratorium until such time as the questions can be answered. Please place people and the environment above money. My children and the inheritors of the earth have so many issues to confront (terrorism, global warming, scarce water, peak oil etc). Please do not make this another problem for them. Once the genie is out of the bottle there is no going back!

Yours sincerely,



Kim Frawley-Major.