

Submission Cover Sheet

# Review of the Moratorium on GM Canola

**Submission Number: 116**

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**Attachments Submitted with this Submission:**

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GM CANOLA REVIEW PANEL SECRETARIAT

Dear Sir/Madam

As a manufacturer and exporter of organically grown foods since 1979, my company is concerned about the possible end of the moratorium on the growing of genetically modified canola in Victoria. We are concerned that ending of the moratorium will severely impact on our business, our employees, and the organic industry as a whole.

Currently, the organic industry in Australia is growing at approximately 20% per annum. Our own experience is that we cannot keep up with the demand of some organic products. Our organic dairy milk, for example, grew at the rate of 50% in the last two years; and this growth would have been greater if we could have secured further supplies. With the appropriate supplies, our growth last year would have been closer to 100%.

The growing of GM canola, and the consequences of possible cross contamination of this seed into the food cycle of organic farmers, would immediately impact on our local and export markets and curtail any growth in our organic industry.

Our company is currently able to gain a premium on our organic foods and, should our products be compromised by GE contamination either at farm level or in shipping and transport, this premium business would be lost. We are not confident in the segregation and identity preservation procedures that are in place to enable GM crops to be separated from conventionally grown products. Our experience over the years is that our customers perceive Australia to be a clean and green country: the growing of GM crops will place this image at risk. There have been instances of contamination by GM corn with organic corn supplies in Canada and, as a result, that market was greatly affected and the image of Canadian organics compromised.

In our industry world-wide, we are aware that some farmers who grow GM crops tend to be haphazard with their application of pesticides and herbicides when growing GM plants and, as a result, many of these crops are subjected to super weed growth and pathogens which then affect neighbouring areas.

We urge and propose a more cautious approach to the introduction of GM foods. We would like to see more testing, better processes and procedures for the segregation of GM-grown foods, and tighter criteria on where these products could be grown to ensure that there is no contamination.

By extending the moratorium on GM foods into the future, we see this as an opportunity to do more research on GM crops and to see that better systems are developed and implemented to safe guard the organic industry. The extension of the moratorium will also be seen as 'Australia being a responsible marketer of conventional and organic foods'. The extended time frame will allow the adequate implementation of the necessary procedures to protect the future of organic foods, for both local and export markets. We see the extension of the moratorium as not disadvantaging the income of Victoria, as the premium currently gained by the conventional canola over GM canola will continue and the organic industry will be protected.

Yours sincerely

Don Lazzaro