

Submission Cover Sheet

# Review of the Moratorium on GM Canola

**Submission Number: 56**

**Name of Individual/Organisation: Bexley Pastoral Company Pty Ltd**

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**Attachments Submitted with this Submission:**

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GM Canola Review Panel Secretariat  
Dept Primary Industries, Level 19-1 Spring Street  
GPO Box 4440, Melbourne Vic 3001

16<sup>th</sup> August 2007

We write in regard to the Victorian State Government's moratorium on genetically modified crops up for review in Feb 2008.

As primary producers in the Tatiara area of the South East of South Australia, the commercial release of genetically modified canola (or any other GM crops) into our local area or nearby Victoria is of great concern to us.

We annually sell prime lambs to Tatiara Meat at Bordertown as a major part of our income. If GM canola is grown in our area or by our neighbours our pastures will become contaminated immediately with stray GM canola plants and cross pollination will occur with other weeds of the *brassica* family and we will not be able to prevent livestock from eating this contaminated material. We will have GM herbicide-resistant weeds scattered all over our farm, our livestock will lose their GM free status, be downgraded and we will lose income as well as a lucrative market.

Cereal cropping is our main source of income, our crops will become contaminated with rogue genetically modified canola plants and weeds from GM drifting pollen and we will be unable to deliver grain as GE free to our markets. This unwelcome toxic technology has the potential to destroy our business totally in a very short time-frame. Through no fault of our own we will be forced to undertake expensive testing to find out if we have been contaminated.

If the moratorium is lifted and we specifically choose to grow Non-GM canola we will very quickly have bees transferring GM pollen from the neighbour's GM crop to our canola flowers and our crop will consequently be given GM genes that develop into seed. We will instantly have our rights taken away by our GM growing neighbour.

There have been statements made on radio recently that Canada receives a premium for its genetically modified canola seed on the export market compared to Australia's Non GM status and we are missing out. We investigated this market ourselves and found Australia at present receives much more for its product than Canada. So it appears this statement was a deliberate untruth and our GM free canola market enjoys a premium, and we need to vigorously protect it.

Common sense tells us segregation of GM from Non -GM is totally impossible no matter what protocols the authorities are promising to put in place. Delivering grain to the silos will become even more difficult and higher costs will be the order of the day.

It is documented that Canada has the biggest noxious weed pest in GM canola. Because it is genetically manipulated to resist herbicides - nothing will kill it. At present Non-GM canola is spreading everywhere on the sides of roads and in paddocks that have never grown canola before - it spreads very easily. GM canola will quickly do the same. Bees and birds know no boundaries. It was reported in the *Advertiser* recently that researchers had detected windborn genetically modified canola pollen blown up to 15 kilometers away.

Harvesting and hay making contractors will be faced with the nightmare of cleaning their combines and equipment between properties to try to stop contamination. It is totally impossible to clean all the seed and material out of a header or hay baler.

To protect the Non-GM farmer there will need to be a Government watchdog body set up to monitor the movement of hay, fodder and livestock from one area to another. There will need to be restrictions or quarantining of certain areas that have grown GM. This will be totally impossible and the cost will be horrendous, South Australia and Victoria will turn into police states with farmer turning against farmer.

Has anyone thought of the implications there will be for pastoralists in out back areas of Australia who have diversified to save their livelihoods by producing wonderful clean organic sheep-meat in the pristine environment of the pastoral country. It will only take a few truck-loads of genetically modified canola hay or meal to be fed out to their (or the neighbours) livestock and seed is scattered everywhere, up comes rogue GM canola plants that immediately cross-pollinate with brassica weeds such as wild radish which is scattered all over that outback country.

This has the potential to devastate this new industry and export market in the space of twelve months if the conditions are right. Who will police and monitor this vast area of Australia?

This is a very serious matter for everyone in Australia, we have so much to lose it is frightening. Once genetically modified seeds are allowed to be grown on a broad scale there is no turning back it cannot be recalled, we will always be contaminated. It will open the flood-gates to allow more food to be tampered with. Many spokespeople pushing GMO's are saying it is all about choices. This is totally wrong and they know it, there will be no choices left - in the long term everything will be genetically modified and farmers who plant GM crops take away the rights of farmers who don't want to grow them- this is the harsh reality.

If the state governments lift the moratorium there will be unprecedented class action law suits taken out against the States, the Federal government and between farmers. Will the state governments guarantee compensation to landholders who are adversely affected by GMO's?

The fastest growing industry at present is the "organic" market (especially in Victoria) with consumers looking for good healthy food grown locally. Organic food production has enormous potential to be a very lucrative market for Australian farmers.

With our farming enterprise we are hoping in the future to gain organic status with our wool, meat and eventually our grains and Lucerne seed production. If this moratorium is lifted we will lose this wonderful opportunity.

We very strongly object to having our rights taken away and our markets and livelihood threatened by an unwanted, unnecessary toxic technology that has no benefit to our enterprise what-so-ever and has the potential to destroy everything we have spent a lifetime working for.

We recommend the moratorium stay in place permanently.

Yours sincerely

Pamela and Peter Cook

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