

Submission Cover Sheet

Review of the Moratorium on GM Canola

Submission Number: 167

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Attachments Submitted with this Submission:

To obtain copies of these attachments please call the Review Panel Secretariat on
(03) 9658 4874 or (03) 9658 4871

**GM Crop Moratorium Review Secretariat
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Re: NSW Review GM Food Crops Ban

I would like to urge the officers conducting the Review of GM crops in New South Wales to take the following points into consideration before making their decision.

It is a well-known fact the Australian public are generally not in favour of GM food. It is also true that some of our major trading partners – Japan and EU – have rejected GM foods and are willing to pay a premium for GM-free produce. According to figures provided by ABARE (2007) this premium is valued at over \$100.00/tonne for canola oil. Australia is currently the only major exporter of GM free canola, however should any State Government decide to end the ban this premium will be lost forever – not only for Canola but for all our agricultural exports.

As an organic grower and consumer I am also concerned at the likely effect on the growing organic farming sector. The likelihood of contamination from a GM site to an organic farm cannot be disregarded or the potential impact underestimated. Buffer zones cannot be relied on to prevent cross-pollination of crops, and there is an even greater risk of cross transferring of GM genes via compatible weeds such as wild radish and mustards.

Another concern is the growing tolerance of weeds that are exposed to unusually high levels of herbicides used in ‘roundup ready’ crops. This creates a dual problem of higher weed numbers in non - GM crops with subsequent increase in herbicide use, resulting in negative impacts on costs for conventional farmers as well as attendant safety concerns.

My final concern is the apparent de facto take over of the agricultural sector by overseas multi-national companies whose monopoly on farm chemicals and seeds will increase, as will their cost burden on farmers and consumers. Many of these companies have poor track records when it comes to ethical practice and taking responsibilities for their mistakes.

In summary I believe the GM crop industry is an unfolding experiment that to date has brought little or no improvements to global agriculture. It is too early to assess the potential long term impact of GM crops, and the Review Board would be seen to be grossly negligent were it to end the current moratorium at this stage.

I remain
Yours faithfully

Andrew Pengelly