

I am based in the UK and I have been fighting against the introduction of GM technology into the food system since 1998 when I first heard about the technology whilst standing in the checkout queue in an Iceland frozen food store in Banbury, Oxfordshire, England. It saddens me greatly that despite many years of actively protesting and educating my fellow humans it turns out that the so called intelligent people in charge have been fooled into believing the 'Hype' put out by the so called scientific community and their financial backers. If they were that expert they would realise that meddling with something that they do not know very much about would be foolhardy and needing to be contained in a hermetically sealed environment. Sadly however common sense has eluded them and now I am forced to spend valuable time attempting to educate even more people who should know better.

Once released it can never be retrieved regardless of the feeble promises the scientists may make to the contrary. Do you want to live in a world where it would be dangerous to even go outdoors because of some genetically created lifeform would possibly cause you serious harm or even death? You may say it will never come to that but can you prove that? Can the scientists prove that? The simple answer is 'NO!'

For a start polling shows most Australians, and global citizens don't want to eat genetically modified (GM) or Genetically Engineered (GE) foods. I most certainly do not want to eat or use anything that is not naturally produced by nature untouched by mad scientists looking for their name in the 'Nature' science journal or a Nobel Peace Prize for science.

I therefore strongly oppose changes to the Food Code that would allow a wide range of GM/GE foods, made using novel methods that have scant history of safe use, to be sold without safety assessment or labelling. These would include meat and milk from some genetically modified/genetically engineered animals and substances like vanilla and stevia produced by genetically modified/genetically engineered

microbes in factory vats. These changes would undermine FSANZ's key responsibilities to ensure food safety and our right to know what is in our food.

Agrochemical companies cannot be trusted to self-assess the safety of GM/GE foods as they have an appalling record of manipulating data to promote dangerous products. We need look no further than Monsanto and their blocking of any research that proved harm done by their GM products and the associated chemicals that the GM tech was designed to work with. How many cases of cancer have there been as a result? I'll leave that for you to contemplate.

Gene editing techniques have been found to make genetic changes that could never occur in nature and to result in widespread genetic damage that often goes undetected by GM developers.

I am deeply concerned that FSANZ has relied on advice from scientists with serious conflicts of interest, to conclude these new GM/GE foods pose no greater risks than existing foods. Those seeking to commercialise GM/GE plants, animals and microbes should play no role in deciding how - or even whether - foods derived from them should be regulated. That is not their role. That is one for FSANZ.

The proposed changes would make Australia one of very few countries in the world to allow genetically modified/genetically engineered animal products into our food chain with no regulation or labelling. This would put us at odds with our international trading partners, which FSANZ admits "may have a significant impact on trade". The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, an international agreement signed by 166 governments worldwide, and the UN's food standards body Codex Alimentarius agree that all GM techniques differ from conventional breeding and that pre-market safety assessments are essential before GM organisms are used in food.

I support expanding the definition for 'gene technology' so FSANZ continues to assess and regulate all techniques and methods of genetic modification, other than conventional breeding. The proposal to deregulate new and emerging GM techniques and their food products, which pose new and unassessed risks, is completely unacceptable and must be regulated accordingly to avoid any subsequent harm to any and all lifeforms.

Thank you for taking my well-founded and informed concerns into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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