

I have been campaigning against the use of GMOs since the 1990s. and I just cannot believe I am still doing this. Monsanto has shown us clearly what the dangers and risks are of allowing GMOs into our ecosystem. Both for the livelihood of farmers and also for the preservation of the environment. Patented seed, terminator genes in crops and insect resistant crops are already creating havoc in our environment, for farmers and the lack of regulation or foresight about these has put our planet and ourselves in danger both on a survival level but also with regards to being at the mercy of corporate interests.

However because they have already been allowed to happen due to the fact that we have massive corruption in government which is completely coopted by corporate entities, I demand that the government start working for the good of the environment, farmers and people in general. To legislate strict laws around the use of GMOs and prevent the health and environmental disasters looming on the horizon with regards to these.

As public servants you have a duty of care to us, the people.

There must be checks, balanced and strict controls to keep these entities accountable for what they are doing. no one wants GMOs, so why are they still an issue? I think they should be outright banned. But legislation to control and for transparency is an absolute requirement going forward if these remain allowable.

I therefore strongly oppose changes to the Food Code that would allow a wide range of GM 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 animals and substances like vanilla and stevia produced by genetically modified 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 foods as they have an appalling record of manipulating data to promote dangerous products.

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 foods pose no greater risks than existing foods. Those seeking to commercialise GM plants, animals and microbes should play no role in deciding how - or even whether - foods derived from them should be regulated.

The proposed changes would make Australia one of very few countries in the world to allow genetically modified 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.

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

Yours sincerely,

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