

Email Submission: Christopher F Wells

I am lodging this submission and calling for a freeze on all GM crops and food approvals in Australia. This means: no new GM crop approvals, no new GM foods and no new GM crop growing areas.

The safety of GM foods for sale in Australia must be re-assessed and data on yield, pesticide use and effects on biodiversity of GM crops in Australia must be publicly investigated.

The two crops that we grow in Australia, GM canola and cotton, should be reviewed. Data showing crop yield, quantity of pesticides used per area and weed resistance should be made available to the public and reviewed by an independent panel including overseas experts. There are numerous studies showing that GM feed causes harm to experimental animals, for example, Monsanto's canola Round Up Ready GT73 resulted in increased liver sizes of 15% when fed to rats in Monsanto's own feeding trial.

There is wide concern about the risks of GM harm to the environment - in the 15 years since the introduction of GM canola to Canada there is a pronounced increase in herbicide use and weed resistance problems. Farmers are forced to resort to 2,4-D to control the superweeds. Farmers are signing contracts which stop them saving seeds. UK Government trials over four years resulted in a halt to GM canola cultivation due to environmental concerns.

GM companies such as Monsanto and Bayer own the seed - the farmer no longer does. If GM canola grows on your property, even if you did not plant it, the chemical company can claim ownership of these plants. This is a great threat to farmers. Studies show the crops that thrive best are those that are adapted to their microclimates over many generations of local farmer knowledge.

GM crops impact our health. they are a threat to farmer's livelihoods, food security, and the biodiversity of the planet. GM foods are minimally tested by the agrochemical companies and the results are often not made public.

I am calling for an immediate halt to GM approvals in Australia and New Zealand, to any expansion of growing of GM crops, and a review of the crops that are currently grown.

The other untested effect of GM is on our Bees. Australia is in the enviable position of having our bees free verolla mite. and we have no understanding of what impact GM has on bees - if we lose our bees we lose our food production.

If the OGTR deregulates these new GM techniques there will be no monitoring or surveillance. Anyone from amateur biohackers - to industry - to terror groups would be free to use them to genetically modify plants, animals and microbes. Entirely new diseases and poisons could be made. And they could enter our food chain and our environment with no safety testing and no labelling. The risks could be catastrophic.

Reviews commissioned by the Austrian and Norwegian governments concluded that not enough is known about the risks posed by these new GM techniques. They recommended that products derived from them require comprehensive case-by-case risk assessments.

As a biodynamic farmer I have seen at first hand the destruction to our soils from chemicals and GM will result in the same outcome.

Australia is marketing its food etc to the World as "Clean & Green" and GM will destroy this BRAND and what company would do that to its BRAND - it is madness

I would like a response: Yes