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No Compromise in Defence of Mother Earth!

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Submission to the 2017 Review of the National Gene Technology Regulatory Scheme

G'day. Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important review.

GM technology is here to stay. Much as many people would like to put the genie back in the bottle, it is never going to happen. Even if GMOs are proven to be as dangerous to health and the environment as some people suspect, there is too much vested interest with too much Government influence for a ban on GM technology in agriculture to be a realistic option in the near future.

Having said that, it must be responsibility of the GM regulatory system to minimise harm, whether potential or actual. There are several simple ways that this can be done.

- Ensure labelling laws are strengthened so that consumers who wish to avoid purchase or consumption of GMOs can make informed choices.
- Strengthen or enact legislation which protects the rights of primary producers to maintain their properties GMO free.
- Strengthen or enact legislation which prevents GMOs from entering the broader ecology.
- Maintain a publicly accessible data base of the location of all GM primary production in order that Australians can make informed choices prior to purchasing new farms or homes.

Recently I was sharing a meal with a conventional 3rd generation dairy farmer, and he asked me if I was “King for a Day” would I make organic agriculture compulsory for all farmers. He was aware that I am a vegan who only eats 100% certified organic or biodynamic wholefoods, and that I set up and run organic food co-ops and farm veganically. My answer surprised him. I replied that as far as I'm concerned if someone wanted to pour chemicals all over the ground and grow food in it, or spray their food with toxic chemicals and eat it, or grow GMOs and eat them, I could not care less. I would though enact “good neighbour” legislation, that is to say that people could do whatever they want on their land but that they need to recognise that what they do should not affect their neighbours or their community.

Given the ethos of rural Australia he found it difficult to argue with the notion that all I would require of him is that he be a good neighbour. So to conclude this submission, we ask that the review of the GM regulatory scheme keep this in mind. Allow producers to do what they like but make sure it does no harm to others.

Peter Maclean
president