

SUBMISSION TO THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD POLICY REFERENCE GROUP

To: Those involved in the Agriculture and Food Policy Reference Group.

As an Australian citizen I am highly concerned by the risks genetically modified (GM) foods pose to the continued growth of Australia's agricultural sector and to the sound ecological management of our natural resources. I am opposed to the development and commercialisation of genetically modified (GM) foods for a number of reasons; including how the introduction of genetically modified (GM) crops will further undermine the food security and autonomy of local and small-scale producers and communities in Australia, and contribute to maintaining and extending the severe ecological destruction and social inequalities that characterise the world food system.

The farming techniques inherent with genetically modified crops are liable to the creation of new forms of ecological problems, intensifying the ecological debt we leave for future generations. The consequences of the intensification and expansion of chemical reliant and industrial farming practices, especially at the time when the hazards of climate change are at their highest, are further threatened by the severe limitations in scientists' understanding of the genetic structure of plants and animals.

I hold serious concerns about the development, regulations and commercialisation of GM foods in Australia and elsewhere. It is clear that product quality, consumer safety and ecological sustainability are being ignored in the rush to commercialise new products and compete in the global market. The lack of government regulation of research, testing and commercialisation of GM foods and the resistance from governments and industry to comply with requests for the full labelling of all GM foods, indicates the clear need for caution.

The dominant global agri-food system is utilising their economic force to introduce genetically modified crops, with no consideration for the exacerbation of the existing ecological and socio-economic problems that the Australian agriculture sector faces. The expansion of the ownership and control of the entire food chain by transnational seed, chemical, biotechnology and food corporations is in no way going to increase the viability of Australian farmers, nor will it put them at a competitive advantage. If you really wish to put Australia at a competitive advantage in the agricultural market, I recommend you keep our produce untainted and emphasise its existing quality.

I thank-you for your time and urge you to consider points raised above when considering the direction and future of Australia's agricultural market.

Yours faithfully,