

Parliamentary enquiry call for Submission:

I am pleased to submit my submission to the **Inquiry into mechanisms for compensation for economic loss to farmers in Western Australia caused by contamination by genetically modified material.**

I am a farmer operating on a 2700 Ha property within the Cunderdin shire in the central wheatbelt of Western Australia. I have owned and managed a conventional mixed farming enterprise consisting of grains, fodder and livestock on various properties in the central wheatbelt since 1992.

My education in agriculture began as a child working with my father in the marginal north eastern regions of the wheatbelt. My education was consolidated at Scotch College and became focussed on Agriculture at Cunderdin Agricultural College and Morawa Agricultural College. I have since completed further Agricultural studies at Muresk institute and built on the foundations of this education during my career as a farmer.

Over the last decade I have begun to realise that my extensive agricultural education had neglected to enlighten me in even the broadest sense on what I now consider to be the key most integral element of sustainability and profitability of agricultural food production, that of the microbiological soil food web. <https://www.soilfoodweb.com.au> . My enlightenment of the wonders and riches of the soil food web was accompanied by alarm. I felt misled and cheated by my realisation that the formal agricultural education of myself and almost all of my agricultural peers was inherently compromised and biased towards an extremely uneconomical and unsustainable reliance on chemical and genetic manipulation of our natural environment and contained a fundamental ignorance of the incredible regenerative and self sustaining elements of soil and plant symbology.

Since my biological awakening I began to experiment with on farm trials. I tested methods and systems designed to enhance and stimulate the natural biological systems functioning on the fields of my farm. I also aimed to simultaneously reduce the debilitating financial risk involved with applying large quantities of expensive bio degrading chemical fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides. The success of these experiments has lead me to transition almost all of my farmland to certified organic status resulting in significantly improved measures of financial and environmental sustainability far beyond my initial hopes and expectations.

Ian James

Inquiry terms of reference:

Inquire into and report on mechanisms for compensation for economic loss to farmers in Western Australia caused by contamination by genetically modified material, including approaches taken in Western Australia and by other jurisdictions and any other relevant matter.

