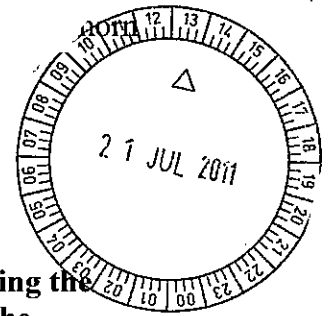


Hon. Brian Ellis
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
Perth
WA 6000

Just Food WA



Dear Mr Ellis,

Petition No 118-Genetically modified canola- Inquiry Request: Requesting the Legislative Council to initiate an inquiry into how the decision to lift the moratorium was made in the face of overwhelming opposition. The inquiry should include an analysis of the current and economic impacts of the decision on rural industries. It should also include an investigation into the likely impacts of the Government's recent sale to Monsanto of a 19.9 per cent stake in its crop breeding company InterGrain and whether any impropriety has taken place.

In reference to the 'overwhelming opposition' I would like to mention

- a) The 27,000 signed petition requesting strict liability to protect farmers and to extend the moratorium on GM crops in Western Australia (Presented October 2008)
- b) The 8,000 postcards also requesting strict liability, extension of the moratorium and transparent GM labelling (Presented October 2008).
- c) The twenty five GM free shires which were originally told that they would be exempt from GM canola trials in 2009.
- d) The 62% of the electorate who did not vote for Liberal Party policy of GM trials, but instead voted for a continued GM moratorium (Labor, Greens, etc) or a Nationals platform to not grow GM food crops.
- e) The vote by MLCs to support the GM canola disallowance motion which was instantly overturned by Minister Redman in March 2009.
- f) The Japanese Consumers' Cooperatives which visited WA to promote their ready market for our GM free canola. Their concern was confirmed by WA's Tokyo Trade Office Commissioner Craig Peacock's emails in January 2009 which warned against adopting GM canola. Minister Redman ignored these concerns.
- g) The nearly 90% of submissions (375) to the GM Crops Free Areas Act 2003 review calling for an extension to the moratorium, strict liability, and GM Free choices for shires. The final report called for more transparency in decision making.
- h) The Beekeepers Industry which was denied access to GM sites information, thus leaving hives vulnerable to possible GM contamination. This could restrict markets where testing for GM could cost \$500,000 p.a. as Coles and Woolworths and the EU demand GM free honey.
- i) The 60% of West Australians who were opposed to the decision to allow GM canola (Newspoll 2009 GM Food, 11/09)
- j) The major grains buyers who are rejecting GM canola such as Elders-Toepfler and Glencore.

Although Minister Redman was aware of the '*Ministerial GMO Industry Reference Group(2009) Information Paper on Genetically Modified Canola*' he ignored vital advice from it relating to a lack of data to show increased yield in GM canola (P21), a need to increase GM yield to cover additional costs (P24) , restricted markets for GM canola (P47) (P49), the potential for GM contamination (P33) (P35), a faulty Governmental belief that Common Law will provide remedy for victims of GM contamination (P75) and a failure to protect non GM farmers and organic farmers with strict liability laws(P76).

Where did the Minister get his advice from to make the decision to allow commercial GM canola production? Despite 11 contamination incidents, the 2009 trials were

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declared successful and Minister Redman deemed coexistence as possible based on a highly artificial trial involving unrealistic methods to control contamination. Was his belief in co-existence formed by his visit to North America and the selective people that he met? Or was he influenced by his relationship with Bill Crabtree, a pro GM supporter who wrote the Liberal Party policy paper "GM Technology for Plants in Agriculture: The Way Forward"?

What formed the Minister's determination to allow GM canola which ignored the wishes of GM free shires, and offered them no help to deal with possible GM contamination? Did his drive to push through GM canola put undue pressure on Liberal MLAs during the GM canola disallowance debate in March 2010? Why did the Minister not adhere to the concessions promised as an appeasement to the approval of GM canola in 2009? These included the GM farmers register, GM farm map, random audit, end point royalty assurance and the right to market GM free. The register and map did not eventuate, the random audits were voluntary, there was no conclusive figure given for end point royalties, and a farming group from Williams was denied the Minister's support to declare them selves GM free canola growers.

In reference to the sale to Monsanto of 19.9% of InterGrain there is a need to investigate if the financial incentive of \$10.5 million paid for the deal affected Minister Redman's decision in such a way for him to ignore his legislated responsibilities and if agreements are anti-competitive.

There is serious concern that the best of non GM varieties will be restricted to GM crops only. What are the implications when there is no demand for GM wheat, international markets are rejecting it, due to the inability to segregate it, and its need to be labelled as GM.?

Was it also a breach of the government's duty to forge public-private partnerships with Monsanto/Nufarm while the following events are in progress?

- Shareholder class action against Nufarm for overstating their financial position
- Shareholder class action against Monsanto for overstating their financial position
- Class action against Monsanto for overstating Roundup Ready 2 yields
- Complaints against Monsanto for overstating SmartStax yields
- U.S. Department of Justice inquiry into Monsanto anti-competitive practices

We have seen the implications from one season of GM canola which resulted in the loss of organic certification for one farmer; the uncertainty to produce GM free produce for conventional canola growers and the Beekeepers industry; the \$50 premium for non GM canola, and the failure of GM canola to find markets.

We need to know how Minister arrived at the decision to allow GM canola to be commercially grown, and an investigation of the selling off of almost 20% of our state wheat breeding programme.

I trust that you will consider these points carefully and agree that these issues warrant a Committee investigation,

Yours sincerely,

Janet Grogan

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