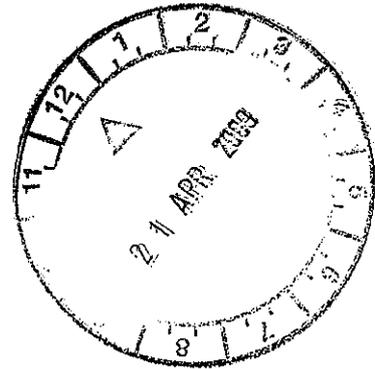


PUBLIC



April 15, 2009

Hon Sheila Mills MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Dear Madam,

Petition No. 22 – Supporting Submission.

Reasons for keeping WA genetically modified Canola free:

Canola has been produced successfully and profitably on our farm and many other properties.

Until now there was no need for GM testing because the WA Government had banned GM Canola. The future cost of testing has not been verified.

We have no guarantees the GM Canola will be cost effective in producing greater yields.

Large numbers of the world wide community do not want GM food. The customer is always right.

Many manufacturers of dairy products, honey and other food derived from grain fed animals are labelling their goods as GM free. This will be almost impossible to guarantee is GM grain is introduced into WA.

It is openly obvious that only two chemical manufacturers are in control of GM Canola seed which is resistant to glyphosate.

Glyphosate is a relatively safe chemical widely used for fire breaks, pre-cropping work and weed control in many gardens and nurseries. The chemical companies freely admit that GM grain contamination was always expected and anticipated. The cost of GM contamination from paddocks has to be borne by GM free growers.

Ordinary canola has spread into rivers, reserves, shelter belts and roadside bush.

GM canola needs more potent and costly chemicals to eliminate growth in bushland. It is inevitable that some bushland will be destroyed.

The fact sheet from the WA Department of Agriculture and Food shows varying figures. Movement of pollen by bees and wind are quoted 3m, 10m to 3km. The outcrossing detected does not show a complete survey. Outcrossing at 0.07% detection is not GM free.

Thank you for accepting this submission regarding the petition tabled by the Hon Matt Benson in the Legislative Council on March 18, 2009.

Yours Sincerely,


Elsie C Baesjou

Enc: Monsanto Canola Technology User Agreement

What Monsanto's GM canola Technology User Agreement (TUA) means for Australian farmers

High input costs:

Monsanto requires farmers to pay five fees for GM canola:

- \$1,000 per farm up front, to be accredited as a GM grower;
- a premium price for the GM seed, set by Monsanto each season;
- top dollar for Roundup Ready herbicide (cheap generics are prohibited);
- \$20.40/tonne end-point-royalty for canola delivered to a silo; and
- expensive specialised weed resistance management advice that is required.

North American GM growers also found a mixture of other herbicides is needed in following years, to kill Roundup tolerant

canola volunteers and herbicide resistant weeds that will germinate for several seasons on the site.

No protection from being sued:

Monsanto's TUA lets the company sue any farmer who sells, saves or gives away patented Roundup Ready GM canola seed. The company also has the right to "inspect, take samples and test all of the grower's owned and/or leased fields and storage bins" and may take copies of all operational documents for three years after you buy any GM canola seed.

Monsanto has sued thousands of North American farmers who never bought GM seed, for allegedly stealing and growing these patented varieties. Facing bankruptcy, most settle out of court. Suing farmers is

now so widespread that in 2008 California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger agreed that since GM crop contamination is inevitable a law was needed to protect growers from being sued for TUA breaches. <http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/Monsanto-vs-us-farmers-report.cfm>

In contrast, Australian governments have refused to pass strict liability laws, leaving farmers unprotected. They say the courts will use the common law to decide GM contamination, patent and TUA infringement cases. This unfairly exposes both GM and non-GM canola growers to legal action.

No Insurance Cover:

Most rural insurance policies in Australia exclude coverage of GM crop damage or contamination. Insurers say test cases will clarify and resolve liability issues. In New Zealand and the UK large insurers (eg: NFU Mutual) would not insure GM after the StarLink corn recall in the USA. Unlicensed GM corn was found in many processed foods. Aventis went out of

business after paying \$1 billion to food industry companies.

In 2003, cost of insurance for agricultural consultants under the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology scheme increased by up to 10-fold, with a large excess. New policies specifically excluded all consulting activities related to GM crops. The risk was just too big.

Lower land values:

To sell your farm within two years of growing GM canola, the TUA requires you to sell only to a buyer who is also willing to sign the Monsanto contract. The new owner must accept all the same contractual obligations and full responsibility for any GM damage or contamination. This could make your land unsaleable, or sell only at a discount price.

The UK-based Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) has 90,000 members world-wide in over 100 countries. RICS says land that loses its GM-free status could suffer substantial capital value depreciation.

For instance, any farm certified by the Soil Association, contaminated by GM crops, would lose its organic status. GM impacts on freehold and rental land values would concern banks if secured loans were based on the land's collateral value.

All Australian supermarkets except Safeway have made all their Home Brand products GM-free. Over 150 other Australian food processors also label GM-free and need guaranteed GM-free supplies. So, local and export markets may be lost as a result of GM contamination on our farms.

GM hay sales are monitored:

In this dry season most GM canola grown in NSW and Victoria was cut for hay. As it contains viable GM seed that could be transferred onto other farms, Monsanto required GM growers to notify the names and addresses of GM hay buyers who may be monitored for having GM seed.

As many dairy farmers and beekeepers, for example, must certify their products as free of all GM processes, they must exclude GM canola crops and hay from their production systems by expensive monitoring and testing. So, GM-free growers pay for GM to be introduced.

Liable for legal and cleanup costs:

Farmers sued by Monsanto are liable for its legal, investigation and cleanup costs.

The world's biggest seed company makes GM and non-GM growers pay.

GM contamination – after just one season:

On November 25, 2008, 5 km West of Horsham, Victoria, CropWatch technicians tested windrowed canola plants and seed that had blown onto the roadside outside a farmer's land. It was GM. Monsanto told the press that GM canola contamination was "always expected and anticipated".

The Victorian DPI, Vic Roads, Horsham Shire Council and Monsanto all refused to decontaminate the site so local farmers collected and disposed of the plants and seeds. CropWatch and Gene Ethics continue to monitor, test (kits are available on request) and expose GM contamination.

For more information please contact:

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