

# SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR

## SUBMISSION FROM SALLY WYLIE, CONSUMERS FOR GM FREE FOOD, MARGARET RIVER

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this enquiry.

Our group is concerned at the move to introduce genetically modified wheat into Australia. This program is being carried out by the CSIRO, in partnership with biotech corporations. They claim that they intend developing and commercialising genetically modified wheat by 2015 .

### THREAT TO WHEAT INDUSTRY

Firstly we see this as a serious threat to Australia's \$4.7 billion export wheat industry. Overseas experience and experience in WA with GM canola demonstrates that GM crops cannot be kept segregated from conventional crops. Contamination is inevitable

Customers do not want GM wheat – nor do we. WA has struggled to sell its GM canola crop because markets do not want GM. If GM wheat is allowed to be commercialized in Australia, it will contaminate the nation's conventional wheat crop.

GM wheat has been rejected by all major wheat growing nations. The Canadian Wheat growers believed that GM wheat had “the potential to virtually destroy the \$3.5 billion industry in Western Canada.”

Consumers in Australia have consistently indicated that they don't want to eat GM foods. GM wheat would be in multiple processed foods should it be commercialized, including bread, pasta and baby foods. In many cases it would have to be labelled – virtually ensuring public rejection. In cases where the foods would not have to be labelled – due to Australia's inadequate labelling laws – the public's overwhelming support for GM labelling would be ignored.

To date, no government or wheat industry body in Australia has considered the impacts that GM wheat commercialization would have on the nation's wheat industry.

### THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

The CSIRO has announced that products made from GM wheat grown under commercialisation trials will be tested on humans. This will be the first testing of GM wheat on humans anywhere in the world – dor any GM food except one brief trial in the UK which was stopped because of concern about the effects on the recipients We question whether this testing will look for adverse or unexpected effects of the wheat?

GM wheat is being commercialised in Australia without any studies into the potential health impacts. What little independent research that has been done on the health impacts of GM food show alarming results. Tests on rats have resulted in kidney and liver malfunction ,allergic reactions and an increase in sterility, amongst other complaints..

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We hope that the Committee will recommend the following to the Government:

That they:

- Stop the commercial trials of GM wheat in Australia.
- Establish an independent wheat industry regulator to guide wheat sector development and a reevaluation of selective breeding which has brought us the majority of crop improvements up till now.
- Stop the release of GM wheat into the environment or the market.
- Stop the testing of GM products on humans
- Soundly rejected GM wheat after Australia's experience with GM canola

Sally Wylie

Consumers for GM Free Food