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Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Primary Industries & Regional Services  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra A.C.T. 2600

Ladies & Gentlemen of the committee,

I have read with interest the terms of reference supplied to me with regards to this submission and am a little concerned with the basic assumption implicit therein, that is that there are benefits without risk in the use of gene splicing technology. Australia has committed considerable intellectual capital in this kind of research and unfortunately the general enthusiasm has perhaps overshadowed the concern which has been expressed overseas. Concern which has resulted in 180 degree changes of government policy in some cases. (U.K., Norway) The case of genetically modified foods is a particularly complicated case. Consider the recent problems over the use of artificial growth hormones in cattle and the trade arguments resulting therefrom. How much more complicated may the use of G. M. foods become. A country that exports so many foodstuffs compromises it's status at it's peril. It may well be that small and medium size companies would do well to avoid these products and emphasise a "natural" image. ie. a clean green image.

It is also a fact that the benefits of this technology are not always as great as the proponents advertise. A case in point being the G.M. cotton sold by Monsanto. The A.B.C. programme "Landline" covered the experience of Australian farmers and their general dissatisfaction with the product.

In conclusion I would not like you to think that I am opposed to the use of this technology. Where the product of the process does not release genetically modified D.N.A. into the environment I believe it can be used with low risk. However to ask those with a financial or intellectual interest in the process to assess the risks involved is surely putting the fox in charge of security at the hen house.

Yours faithfully

----- D.F.Cook.