

MONSANTO



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Elton Humphery
Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Humphery

Inquiry into Food Standards Australia New Zealand Amendment Bill 2007

I refer to the recent invitation by the Community Affairs Committee for written submissions in relation to the "[Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Amendment Bill 2007](#)" (herein referred to in this submission as "the Bill"). Using biotechnology, Monsanto has developed a range of food products that are produced locally or in other parts of the world and subsequently imported into Australia for consumption by Australians. Before entering into the marketplace these products are assessed for their safety by FSANZ, and thus FSANZ's processes are extremely important to not only Monsanto's global operations, but the activities of food producers in Australia and throughout the world. We have reviewed the Bill and offer the following comments.

We note that proposed amendments to the legislation take due consideration of the interests of all stakeholders including those of industry, consumers and relevant governments. We also note that this Bill has evolved as a result of an exhaustive public consultation process. This will not only allow more transparency in the risk assessment of food but at the same time it is likely to enhance consumer confidence in the food products derived using modern technologies.

It is recognised that a great deal of effort has gone into making the assessment process more efficient, flexible and predictable. Indeed all of these factors are a prerequisite for our industry as all products are developed after extensive research and there can be a long gestation period from the concept stage to the final

commercial product. Furthermore, within the industry, the products are so diverse that we encourage the proposal to implement different assessment procedures corresponding to the different applications. This would allow flexibility in the assessment processes and food standard setting system.

We urge the committee to recommend adoption of the Bill largely as presented, our only concern is in relation to a specific section of the Bill as stated below.

Item 76 proposes the introduction of a process whereby the consideration of an application can be suspended by the Authority for up to 18 months, if the application relates to the subject matter of a policy guideline that the Ministerial Council is developing. We note that 18 months is a long period of time for an application to be in abeyance. We recommend that communication processes are evolved whereby an applicant is informed in advance that Council is developing policy guidelines that may affect a particular application. Knowing in advance allows applicants to plan accordingly .

We thank the committee for the opportunity to make a submission to their enquiry into the [Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Amendment Bill 2007](#). Should the committee have any questions in relation to the comments provided above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Dr. Alok Kumar
Regulatory Product Manager