

Att: Senate Select Committee on the AUSFTA:

I am writing as a concerned private citizen to express my concerns about several issues to do with the proposed AUSFTA.

1) The recombinant growth hormone, manufactured by Monsanto, is implicated as a cause of breast cancer in women, and of being a potent single cause of cancer in children (1). The US Food and Drugs Administration did not test this hormone before its release, and relies on the assurance of the GM industry giants that their products are safe (2). There is also a lack of independent peer reviews of the so-called industrial testing of GM foods (3).

As American farmers are subsidised to produce mountains of excess foods, the USA will be able to import low-priced, unlabelled GM products which other countries have refused on health and safety grounds.

2) We may also have to accept untested products of Nanotechnology; this industry is a cause for much concern amongst reputable scientists because of the ability of minute nano-particles to migrate to the human brain and other organs, with as yet unknown results. Animal tests have shown that this happens with fish. There is no requirement for this technology to be either regulated or tested, and there is nothing to prevent the importation of Nanotech products into Australia, or the setting up of companies here which pose a risk to health and the environment.

3) Irradiated foods are also a concern. Recent studies on food irradiation have shown that a chemical generated by irradiation 2-dodecylcyclobutanone (2DCB) causes significant DNA damage. 2-DCB is a unique irradiated product of palmitic acid, an acid that is found in large quantities in most fruits and vegetables. An irradiation plant which is under construction in Queensland is an example of the gung-ho attitude of MP's who approve of such technologies, whilst not choosing to read about the scientific facts.

We do not need dangerous technologies and products from America and elsewhere, which will undermine the economic viability of our agricultural and horticultural industries, and which pose a health risk.

Irradiation is a dangerous technology looking for a use. The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Council (ANZFS) did not approve the irradiation of nuts under application A413 by nuclear irradiation company Steritech as they found no technological need. Though ANZFS approved in this application the irradiation of herbs, spices and herbal infusions, there are healthier technologies such as steam treatment to clean these food products.

- I am worried that irradiated herbal teas don't have to be labelled if sold for medicinal purposes. If any ingredient of packaged food or food sold in eateries has been irradiated, there must be clear labelling as 'Irradiated food' or 'Ionizing radiation'.

Scientific studies have shown that irradiation destroys up to 96% of vitamins A, B, C, E and K along with other essential nutrients. George

L. Tritsch Ph.D, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, New York has publicly stated: 'I am opposed to food irradiation because it is clear that this process increases the levels of mutagens and carcinogens in the food. The inevitable consequence of this is that in two to five decades in the future, the incidence of cancer will increase from what we see now, in direct proportions to the amounts of irradiated food consumed'<sup>1</sup>

4) Another issue that is only just skinning the surface of the public debate over the AUSFTA is the 'investor-state provision' that according to US law, has to be in this agreement.

This investor-state provision allows for US investors to sue for damages against our local, state &/or federal laws. &/or administrative decisions, that prohibit them from entering any areas of our domestic economy.

It is not just our PBS that is threatened, but any other domestic initiative either subsidised by the tax-payer, or regulated by any level of our governments! The Aus-US Free Trade Agreement can be compared to General Agreement on Trade in Services, and also to the North American Free Trade Agreement, and agreements with other countries such as Mexico. Any country which signs these deals ends up done like a dinner, and loses out on its right to protect people's working conditions and the environment. Under the North American Trade Agreement, the USA (for once the victim of the rules) was recently forced to accept carcinogenic petrol additives which can dangerously pollute groundwater and damage people's health.

I hope that you can take my concerns into consideration.

Yours sincerely,  
Gillian Blair