

**SUBMISSION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION RE REGULATION OF
AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE August 1st 2016**

I wish to comment on a couple of the items in the “Key Points” information sheet where it is suggested that some regulations should be removed namely;

- state bans on cultivating genetically modified crops
- and the mandatory labelling of genetically modified foods

Situated as it is, Tasmania is in a unique position geographically to protect itself from invasive pests and diseases and our state government has the support of all sides of parliament in maintaining the ban on the use of GM crops. If GM crops were allowed our clean green image would be irrevocably damaged.

We do not have the economies of scale of the mainland and so are best at value-adding and producing niche crops and employing both organic and GM free produce.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM NON-GM CROPS

Worldwide there is a steady upward trend in consumer sentiment towards purchasing GM free, organic plant and animal products and in fact Monsanto, Bayer and Syngenta have now pulled out of Europe because they realise that there is no longer interest in their products.

<http://permaculturenews.org/2013/06/18/ban-gmos-now-health-environmental-hazards-especially-in-the-light-of-the-new-genetics> The breeding of new highly productive crops such as wheat, rice and maize has been achieved without the use of GM varieties.

From Institute for Responsible Technology

<http://www.responsibletechnology.org/posts/whole-foods-market-gmo-labeling-announcement-reverberating-through-industry/> article on phenomenal growth in products marked non GM. Sales have risen by 15-30% in USA for non-GM crops

PROBLEMS WITH CONTAMINATION OF NON GM CROPS BY GM CROPS

One of the main dangers in allowing GM crops is the fact that giant companies such as Monsanto, once they create a GM crop, can then patent it, ensuring they have a monopoly on its sales and at the same time dramatically decreasing plant diversity. It is the height of stupidity to rely so heavily on only a few GM crops- if one should fail there is then no back-up.

A few years ago there were many occasions when Monsanto sued farmers when the latter's GM free crops were contaminated by Monsanto's GM crops. How unfair was that? Farmers then fought back and some were able to sue Monsanto for contaminating their crops. However Monsanto has now moved the goal posts once again and subsequently retaliated by promising not to sue farmers with the result that farmers can now not sue Monsanto!! See the following two articles on this subject

<http://www.activistpost.com/2013/08/monsanto-can-sue-farmers-when-gmo.html>

<http://www.pubpat.org/osgatavmonsantocafcddecision.htm>

DETRIMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH EFFECTS FROM USE OF GM CROPS

Once introduced, they can never be removed and there is ample evidence worldwide of the detrimental health effects on both people and stock from the consumption of these foods. See the following scientific articles which list some of these toxic effects

http://www.greenpeace.org/australia/PageFiles/434214/GM_Fact%20Sheet_Health_%20and_Env_Impacts.pdf

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/potential-health-hazards-of-genetically-engineered-foods/8148>

<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/health-risks-of-eating-gmo-foods.html>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1392248/>

PROBLEMS WITH CREATION OF SUPER BUGS AND SUPER PESTS

There is also the increasing concern that these GM crops are creating superbugs and super pests

<http://www.panna.org/blog/monsantos-superweeds-superbugs> Article from Pesticide Action Network discussing the emergence of super bugs and super pests on GM crops

PROBLEMS FACING OUR BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY IF GM CROPS ARE ALLOWED

The bee keeping industry here in Tasmania would collapse if GM crops were allowed as bees could not only transfer pollen from GM crops to non-GM crops but also contaminate the honey in their hives; a disaster as Tasmania relies on its clean green image when exporting this produce.

HOW PRODUCERS OF GM CROPS MANIPULATE THE PRESS

<http://www.gmfrecymru.org/documents/pesticides.html> article on how creators of GM crops manipulate the press. They will deny that their product is harmful, blame others for inaccurate research and misuse of their products etc.

IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING LABELLING OF GM PRODUCTS

Mandatory labelling of GM crops should continue as it is essential that the public should be informed if any food which they wish to consume originates from GM crops. There are too many unknowns as to the safety of these crops and the cautionary principle should be invoked.

