

**REVIEW OF THE MORATORIUM ON USE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS
IN TASMANIA (2019)**

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**GMO Moratorium Review
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To Whom It May Concern

Thank you for the opportunity to present our submission in respect of the impending decision to maintain the moratorium on the use of Genetically Modified Organisms in Tasmania.

We submit the following views which express our ongoing concern that the introduction of Genetically Engineered, or Modified (GM) crops into the state will pose a serious risk to the broader environment for native plants and animals. We also believe claims about economic benefits for farmers from growing GM crops remain highly controversial and contentious. Important, productive and thriving organic, stoned fruit, and honey industries will also be severely impacted by the introduction of GM crops, threatening their viability, and the loss of livelihoods of thousands of families.

Modified truth v modified genetics.

There is little or no evidence that GM is more profitable and beneficial for farmers in the long-term since cost increases will apply for both GM and non-GM farmers. Retaining Tasmania's GM-free status will potentially be far more economically beneficial to our farmers and primary producers with so many world markets now seeking food products that are certified GM-free.

Tasmania's fruit growers, beekeepers, wine and dairy producers gain premiums from Tasmania's GM-free reputation and branding in Australia. These sectors are significant contributors to our economy, and products are highly sought after in export food markets because of the GM-free status. This prized market differentiation would be seriously damaged, resulting in falling revenues should the moratorium be lifted.

Canola is the only broad-acre GM crop that Tasmanian farmers could grow, yet it would put the reputation of all our primary industries at risk, jeopardising the overall Tasmanian brand for quality. Despite the supporters and manufacturers of GM promising higher yields, these have not eventuated, neither have claims GM crops would be salt or drought tolerant, or produce more nutritious foods. My understanding is that commercial GM plants - soy, corn, cotton, canola and

sugarbeet - only resist being killed by Roundup weed killer so farmers can spray more herbicide more often. A few varieties also make their own insect toxins;

The world already produces enough food to feed everyone well without the need for GM crops, but due to political, social and economic reasons the one billion people around the world who are in need of affordable and nutritious food are denied this basic human right. (<http://time.com/5573850/cuba-food-shortage-economic-crisis/>)

We are told farmers and consumers will have the choice of avoiding GM crops and food but this claim cannot be substantiated since it isn't possible to segregate legal and market demands.

A list of the pros and cons of GM-crops – and with so many unknowns the cons should be considered very carefully before accepting without scrutiny, the supposed pros.

<https://www.bettermeetsreality.com/pros-and-cons-benefits-disadvantages-of-gmo-crops-foods/>

We are told common law will address unfair liability problems, but this is unlikely as the non-GM farmers would be liable for economic loss associated with GM crops.

We are told the future for GM crops will be better despite their significant threat to food and agriculture. As consumers we do not accept there should be any allowances for traces of raw pharmaceuticals in food crops.

We believe the drive towards GM is more to do with the patent associated with this type of plant breeding, and the corporate investment opportunity for the scientific community, not for the presumed benefits to either farmers or consumers.

Inaccuracies of corporate claims re GM

“Ten corporations control nearly 70% of the world's seed market, **yet small-scale farmers produce the majority of the world's food.** Corporate control of agriculture means farmers have less choice.

Genetic Engineering **does not feed the world.** Many farmers around the world do not grow Genetically Engineered crops.

Industrial agriculture **uses synthetic fertilisers and toxic chemicals that pollute vital water and soils.**

Excessive use of synthetic fertilisers in industrial polluting agriculture contributes to climate change.

A better solution

We believe that **ecological** farming is the solution. In a nutshell, it refers to ensuring healthy farming and food for today and tomorrow, by protecting soil, water and climate, promoting biodiversity, and not contaminating the environment with chemical inputs or genetic engineering.

Some benefits of ecologic farming:

- It keeps farming food production in the hands of farmers and away from corporate control.
- Ecological farming helps cope with climate change.
- Some 2.6 billion small-scale farmers already produce the majority of the world's food. *(Tasmania has many small-scale farmers)*
- Ecological farming is proven to be more profitable for farmers in studies from Europe, Africa, Asia and America." *(from the Greenpeace website)*

"In most cases and for most species there is no realistic chance for coexistence between GM and non-GM farming, just as there is none between silence and noise in a room." EU Conference quote.

GM contamination continues to pose too great a risk. For an island state like Tasmania that has developed, and relies on, a strong, diverse agricultural industry, lifting the moratorium on GM-crops is too great a risk, and there is no going back should it prove a very costly mistake. We have a valuable point of difference remaining GM-free, let's keep it that way.

In closing this short submission we strongly urge you to uphold the moratorium of GM into Tasmania, and ask that you consider the far greater benefits to our farming and fine food industries and communities that will be achieved by ensuring the state retains its GM-free status.

Thank you for reading this submission.

Anne Layton-Bennett