

# Submission from Sandra Murray

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## 2019 Review of the Moratorium on GMOs in Tasmania 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Thankyou for the opportunity to submit a response to your invitation regarding the 2019 review of the moratorium on GMOs in Tasmania. My recommendations in response to the terms of reference:

- A. The potential market advantages and disadvantages of allowing or not allowing the use of gene technology in Tasmanian primary industries, including food and non-food sectors;
- B. Any other relevant matters raised during the review.

### **Nationally**

In Australia it is estimated that Coles and Woolworths control 55-60% of Australia's total grocery market with the remainder being shared between IGA/Metcash, ALDI and small independent retailers. With approximately 64% of Australians choosing to do their food and grocery shopping across all the major supermarkets and speciality stores (1). The food items that consumers are choosing are increasingly generic house brands (private label) with the current market share at 23% but this is expected to trend towards 30% (2).

When looking more closely at the GM food policies of each of the Australian food retailers, maintaining GM-free status by our primary producers does and will continue to be an important point of difference. It will provide a marketing edge in the primary production and food retail sectors particularly given the move for retailers to source GM free ingredients for their own generic house brands. This is illustrated in the following examples:

- **Woolworths own-brand products do not use genetically modified (GM) ingredients.** Woolworths passes the responsibility back down its supply chain, in relation to own brands (3).
- **Coles states that their own brands contain no GM ingredients** but that they have no control over the other brands on their shelves (4).
- **Aldi have achieved 'green' status for their Genetically Modified (GM) policy** in Greenpeace's True Food Guide. ALDI does not stock any products which are labelled as containing GM ingredients (5).
- **IGA though a smaller play in the market states that they are "GM Free - for you and me"**. Metcash/IGA that it is a requirement in their supplier agreement that no GM ingredients be used in their generic house branded products, such as IGA Signature and Black & Gold brands, including food additives, processing aids and enzymes. In recognition of this, Greenpeace Australia have awarded IGA brands a "green" rating in their True Food Guide (6).

### **Internationally**

An increasing number of retailers are moving towards a policy to avoid GM ingredients in their generic home brand food items such as Marks & Spencer and Tesco in the UK who have also stated that they are committed to avoiding selling fresh meat and dairy produce from animals that have been fed a GM diet (7,8).

### **Recommendation**

**Impose an immediate and indefinite freeze on: the growing of GM food crops for commercial purposes; the importation of GM foods and food components; and the patenting of genetic resources for food – until thorough independent research into the effects of GM foods on the economy, agronomy, health, society, and the environment has been undertaken, and until this work is completed.**

Kindest regards

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### References

- (1) Mortimer G, Parker C, 2013. Fact Check - is our grocery market one of the most concentrated in the world?. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from <http://theconversation.com/factcheck-is-our-grocery-market-one-of-the-most-concentrated-in-the-world-16520>
- (2) Stuart Alexander Research, Australian grocery market Woolworths, Coles and Wholesale. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from [http://www.stuartalexander.com.au/aust\\_grocery\\_market\\_woolworths\\_coles\\_wholesale.php](http://www.stuartalexander.com.au/aust_grocery_market_woolworths_coles_wholesale.php)
- (3) Woolworths Limited. Genetically Modified (GM) Foods. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from [http://www.woolworthslimited.com.au/page/A\\_Trusted\\_Company/Responsible\\_Sourcing/Genetically\\_Modified\\_GM\\_Foods/](http://www.woolworthslimited.com.au/page/A_Trusted_Company/Responsible_Sourcing/Genetically_Modified_GM_Foods/)
- (4) Coles Ltd, Sustainability, Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from <http://www.coles.com.au/about-coles/corporate-responsibility>
- (5) Aldi Australia, Quality Assurance, Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from <https://corporate.aldi.com.au/en/corporate-responsibility/environment/>
- (6) IGA, Sustainability. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from <https://www.iga.com.au/sustainability/sustainability-policy/>
- (7) Marks and Spencer Corporate office. 2015. Animal feed update. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from <https://corporate.marksandspencer.com/documents/plan-a-our-approach/foods-2016/non-gm-foods-policy-oct2015.pdf>
- (8) Tesco. 2018. Our approach to genetically modified ingredients. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from <https://www.tescopl.com/reports-and-policies/our-approach-to-genetically-modified-ingredients/>