

Submission on Review of GMO Moratorium April 26 2019

I wish to make a short submission in support of maintaining the moratorium on GMOs in Tasmania. The main reason for this is that Tasmania, as an island, is in a unique position in Australia just because it is an island. Therefore, it does not risk contamination from land-based agriculture in adjacent states where GMOs are permitted. Also Tasmanian agriculture and niche business based on primary production thrive on its clean green reputation. Such a reputation should not be put in jeopardy by lifting the moratorium on GMOs.

There is a movement towards a circular economy, especially in European countries, so that society moves away from the “make, use and dispose” philosophy towards an economy based on local production and consumption of food and other commodities, with maximum reuse of materials.

It appears that the introduction of GMOs in Tasmania would be part of a movement towards export markets, rather than production for the local market where higher value products are sold on the basis of their provenance and quality rather than on mass-production. Is this the approach that Tasmanians, not just those engaged in primary production, favour?

There are several other questions that must be answered satisfactorily before lifting the moratorium on GMOs can be considered.

- Has a comprehensive policy been developed, as it has been in several other countries, including Norway where the precautionary principle is considered in decision-making regarding the release of GMOs into the environment?
- Would such a policy include consideration of a comprehensive set of criteria that are well understood by those working on its development and would expert opinion be sought from international bodies with broad experience in GMO legislation?
- Has any such research on such a set of criteria been carried out in Tasmania since the moratorium came into effect?

The future of Tasmanian agriculture and horticulture and the many small and micro-businesses involved depend on recognition of the Tasmanian Brand.

The introduction of GMOs in Tasmania would damage the brand and potentially destroy the viability of local entrepreneurs whose businesses depend on Tasmania’s reputation for fine, pure and natural local produce.

It is therefore extremely important that the moratorium is not lifted at this time, and that research be carried out on stringent criteria which might in future allow limited introduction of GMOs.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this important topic.

Yours sincerely,

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