

Media Release



1 September 2008

LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Editor,

WA Labor's proposal to spend \$1 million to test foods for GM ingredients is deliberately emotive, rather than a sound policy position based on fact.

GM foods approved in Australia undergo a rigorous safety assessment by appropriate authorities both in Australia and abroad. There are more than 200 peer-reviewed published studies that have not detected any negative aspects of GM foods, supporting the volumes of data provided to regulators. In fact, GM foods have undergone more scrutiny globally than any other food in the marketplace.

West Australians have been consuming GM foods for at least a decade in cottonseed oil, imported canola, corn and soy, with no adverse health effects. Global production of GM crops is increasing and was estimated at 114 million ha, across 23 countries involving 12 million farmers in 2007. Other states, such as Victoria and NSW have now lifted moratoria on cultivation of GM canola, a technology denied to WA farmers.

Labelling of GM foods is already required in Australia with some exceptions, namely oils and highly refined products. Currently, no testing method, including that proposed by the WA Government, can detect DNA or protein in highly refined oils and products as the refining process breaks down and removes all the DNA and protein.

These funds would be better spent tackling a real health problem such as childhood obesity.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anna Lavelle
CEO, AusBiotech

AusBiotech is Australia's biotechnology industry organisation, which represents more than 3000 members covering the human health, agricultural, medical device, bioinformatics, environmental and industrial sectors in biotechnology.

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