

gene ethics
working for a GM-free future

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QUESTIONNAIRE: FEDERAL ELECTION 2010

Party policies on Genetically Manipulated Organisms (GMOs)

Please complete and return by COB Monday August 9, 2010

Party name: *Australian Greens* Email:

Answered by: *Senator Scowert* Role: *spokesperson*

Telephone: Mobile:

QUESTIONS (please clearly X your responses) Yes; No; No Policy

Does your party have a policy on GM and its products? (please send)

If elected, will your party's MPs advocate and work to:

1. Require all foods made using genetic manipulation and other new processes with a limited history of safe use to be labelled, including foods now exempt from labeling - GM vegetable oils, starches & sugars, products of animals fed GM feedstuff, animal feed, animal clones & their offspring, etc?

Comment:

2. Sign and ratify the international Biosafety (Cartagena) Protocol, the first & only treaty under the UN Convention on Biodiversity, that aims for the safe international transfer, handling and use of GMOs?

Comment:

3. Amend the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, to require the Environment Minister to review the biodiversity impacts of all commercial GMO release proposals?

Comment:

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If elected, will your party's MPs advocate and work to:

Yes; No; No Policy

4. Amend the law to prohibit the patenting of living organisms and other products of nature, including their genetic components?

Comment:

5. Increase public investment in sustainable agricultural systems that respond to the end of oil and phosphates, and the onset of climate change, by reducing spending on GM crop, animal & food research?

Comment:

6. Hold a public review of GM research into synthetic organisms, terminator, animals for organ transplant, microbes, trees, fish, insects, etc?

Comment:

7. Review and amend the Commonwealth Gene Technology Act to:

- Amend the definition of 'environment' to conform with the EPBC Act and the principles of ecologically sustainable development?
- Make providers of commercial GMOs strictly liable for any harm or contamination that their technology or its products cause?
- Require GM technology providers to pay the costs of GM dealings including, for instance, buffer zones and segregation systems?
- Give all parties full appeal rights on decisions made by the Office of Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR)?
- Strengthen the Precautionary Principle, and apply it to all the assessments of risk for dealings with GMOs?
- Require proof that GMOs are safe to health and environment?
- Set strict standards for the required rigour and independence of scientific evidence submitted with GMO applications?
- Ensure that an absence of conclusive evidence always triggers further independent research before any licences are issued?
- Revoke the sections on Emergency Dealing Determinations?

Comment: *The greens would like to see a review of the EDD sections to ensure they are modified to prevent misuse.*

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Principles

The Australian Greens believe that:

1. genetically manipulated organisms (GMOs), their products, and the chemicals used to manage them, pose unacceptable threats to natural and agricultural ecosystems.
2. the precautionary principle must be applied to the use of genetically manipulated organisms and the techniques for producing them.
3. GMO assessments must be broad, independent and scientifically robust, and any negative effects detected and addressed proactively.
4. as living organisms - plants, animals and micro-organisms - are not inventions, patents on life are unethical, against the public interest and should be banned.
5. the Australian government must ban plant GMOs with seeds made sterile by 'terminator' (Gene Use Restriction) technologies, so they will not germinate when planted, and advocate this policy in Convention of Biological Diversity negotiations.
6. farmers and consumers have a right to grow and consume food that is not genetically manipulated.
7. everyone has a right to know if foods contain any ingredients made using GM techniques, through the comprehensive labelling of those products.

Goals

The Australian Greens want:

8. a moratorium on the release of GMOs into the environment until there is an adequate scientific understanding of their long term impact on the environment, and human and animal health.
(NB: most GM products are fed to animals)
9. mandatory labeling of all foods containing any ingredient, additive, processing aid or other constituent produced using GMOs.
10. a ban on patenting all living organisms - plants, animals and micro-organisms - and naturally occurring DNA code sequence information.
11. a scientific system which sets objective benchmarks, standards and quality assurance systems in advance, to mandate top quality, peer reviewed scientific evidence must be the only basis for assessing and licensing GMOs.
12. a strengthened, transparent, precautionary regulatory and monitoring system which prevents GMO contamination.
13. impact assessment research criteria and benchmarked processes that ensure GMOs are safe for the environment, and that derived foods are safe for human consumption.

Measures

The Australian Greens will:

14. sign and ratify the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol (on the safe international transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms) so that Australia fulfils its responsibilities under the Convention on Biological Diversity.
15. review and amend the Commonwealth Gene Technology Act 2000 (as amended) to:



AUSTRALIAN GREENS POLICY: Genetically Manipulated Organisms FINAL NOVEMBER 2009

www.greens.org.au/about/policies

- ensure the precautionary principle is rigorously applied to all applications for the general or restricted release of any GMO;
 - ensure that assessment processes are objectively and fairly conducted by independent scientists and community representatives with the power to influence the regulators decisions;
 - ensure that assessment processes examine the potential benefits as well as the risks of any proposal to release GMOs, and not issue a license where the risks outweigh the benefits; and
 - require economic, social, marketing and ethical factors to be part of impact assessment processes.
16. put in place a moratorium on the release of any GMOs into the Australian environment for trial or commercial purposes
 17. remove as far as possible all GMOs from the Australian environment and food supply while the moratorium is in force.
 18. require mandatory, accurate and comprehensive labelling of all foods and animal feed containing any ingredient, additive, processing aid or other constituent produced using GMOs.
 19. require certification of all imported seed, food and other products as GM or GM-free and ensure facilities exist for stringent testing.
 20. make balanced, accurate, complete and high quality information available to the interested public, on the environmental, economic and social aspects of the genetic manipulation of living organisms.
 21. change publicly-funded agricultural research and development priorities and resourcing from genetic manipulation to sustainable production methods.
 22. fund independent scientific research to investigate the risks, hazards and costs of GMOs (including the associated use of agrichemicals) to human health, the environment, society and the economy.
 23. replace the existing ad hoc system of GMO assessment, licensing and monitoring with a scientific system consistent with our principles.
 24. ensure that when regulators assess the risks of GMOs as manageable and issue a license, they specify the agencies or individuals responsible for the identified risks and mandate the management systems to be used.