

> Whose National Food Plan? <

MADGE and Gene Ethics rally this morning to tell Agriculture Minister Joe Ludwig that the National Food Plan must have the goals of a fair, healthy and sustainable food future for all Australians. But he is inside, promoting his 'trade' version of the Plan to Rural Press Club journalists.

The Plan should focus on public health, farmer sustainability and Australian food sovereignty, to ensure our nation's capacity to feed us all well. But the government's commerce, trade and export agenda ignores Australian food needs, supports big business and backs foreign control of our food supply.

Planning our food future requires the full participation of public interest advocates and citizens. But instead the National Farmers Federation (NFF), Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC), CSIRO, Woolworths, and others are allowed to promote their sectional interests. Genetic manipulation giant Monsanto, for instance, is an associate member of the AFGC.

Local producers are the mainstay of our food systems and are the people who feed us. To achieve real food security, their economic and environmental viability must be protected. Unregulated global markets in food bring hardship to farmers and our local food processors as food imports explode. Big supermarkets control 60% of Australian food retailing and cause economic hardship for primary producers with price wars staged at farmer expense.

Foreign corporations increasingly dominate our farm and food industries:

- Monsanto that owns 25% of world seed and 90% of GM seed bought 20% of WA public wheat and barley breeder InterGrain that supplies 40% of Australia's wheat seed. Monsanto wants to develop GM wheat.
- Cargill, the world's largest trader of farm commodities, has bought the Australian Wheat Board's commodity business and is set to become Australia's largest wheat exporter. Argentina accuses Cargill of large-scale tax evasion and a company part-owned by Cargill has bought all the available wheat feed in the UK.
- Australian State Governments, universities and research organizations like CSIRO are partnered with or linked to Monsanto, Dow Agrosiences, Bayer and many other foreign corporations who set their priorities.

Democratise the National Food Plan!!

Gene Ethics: info@geneethics.org www.geneethics.org 1300 133 868
MADGE: info@madge.org.au www.madge.org.au

over page

Australian Government Food Plan Ludwig's priorities

The government's Food Plan discussion paper says:

"International trade is crucial to maintaining Australia's economic prosperity, employment growth and rising living standards. The government's key trade policy objectives are to maintain access to open markets and liberalise access to other markets.

Australia is a relatively small but important exporter of quality food commodities and products, feeding over 30 million people a year. Its agrifood exports have been valued at around \$25-30 billion a year in recent years (2005-10), resulting in a significant trade surplus and accounting for about 15-18 per cent of Australia's annual merchandise exports.

Exposing businesses to global competition is good trade policy and sound domestic economic policy.

Openness to trade keeps the cost of farming inputs low and drives economic reform as Australia's competitors find new ways to reduce costs and improve quality through innovation, which obliges Australian companies to match or better them.

Governments in Australia have promoted food affordability for all Australians by encouraging competition in the food industry and trade in food products, which helps put downward pressure on food prices.

Growth in the productivity of the Australian food industry ensures they remain internationally competitive. This is crucial for a small, open economy like Australia's, which is highly dependent on trade, particularly exports."

Democratise the National Food Plan!!

MADGE: info@madge.org.au www.madge.org.au
Gene Ethics: info@geneethics.org www.geneethics.org 1300 133 868