

**GM-Free Australia Alliance: News Media release Friday, 22nd July 2016
Markets say keep state powers over GM crop bans and keep GM food labels**

GM-Free Australia Alliance members reject the Productivity Commission's recommendations [http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/agriculture/draft to remove states' rights to ban genetically manipulated \(GM\) crops for marketing reasons and to remove GM food labelling](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/agriculture/draft%20to%20remove%20states%20rights%20to%20ban%20genetically%20manipulated%20(GM)%20crops%20for%20marketing%20reasons%20and%20to%20remove%20GM%20food%20labelling). GM crops pose unacceptable risks to our health, the environment and key export markets and removing the bans and GM labelling would eliminate choice for farmers and consumers.

Louise Sales from Friends of the Earth's Emerging Tech Project says: "The Productivity Commission has ignored the compelling evidence from the Tasmanian and South Australian Governments, and other stakeholders, that show the value of remaining GM-free. Instead its report reads like a Monsanto press release."

"**GM canola has been a complete flop in Australia.** The European Union buys the vast majority of Australian canola and pays a premium of up to \$70/tonne more for GM-free canola than for GM varieties. These highly profitable exports are under threat from any GM contamination and state moratoria minimise the risk of GM contamination. GM seed sales are down 10% in WA this season."

Bob Phelps of Gene Ethics says: "ending state powers to establish GM-free zones for marketing reasons would mean any GM crop approved by the Federal Government regulator (OGTR) could be grown anywhere, without state or local approval. Australia's key trading partners have zero tolerance for unapproved GM crops, so would react badly if Australia allows new types of GM crops (such as GM wheat) before they are approved elsewhere."

"**For example,** the US National Grain and Feed Association estimates that US exporters and farmers lost up to \$2.9 billion in corn exports to China in 2013/14 because of the presence of an unapproved GM corn variety - Viptera."

An Australian Farm Policy Journal article last year concluded that: "GM crops and food could seriously 'taint' the brand position of non-GM Australian produce in Asian markets".

Fran Murrell from MADGE says: "State bans on GM crops exist to protect valuable export markets because most shoppers globally don't want to eat GM-free food. GM and GM-free labelling enables shoppers to avoid GM food for a range of ethical, environmental and health reasons."

"**We urge everyone** to reject the Productivity Commission's proposals during the next round of public comment on its draft report," Ms Murrell concludes.

Media contacts

Louise Sales, Friends of the Earth: 0435 589 579

Fran Murrell, MADGE: 0401 407 944

Bob Phelps, Gene Ethics: 0449 769 066

National Grain Feed Association. 2014. *Lack of Chinese Approval for Import of U.S. Agricultural Products Containing Agrisure Viptera™ MIR 162: A Case Study on Economic Impacts in Marketing Year 2013/2014*
Review of Asian Consumer Attitudes Towards GM Food and Implications for Agricultural Technology Development in Australia. Woodhead et al. *Farm Policy Journal*; Vol.12; No.3; Spring 2015
FoEA (2015) *GM 2.0: Australian regulators engineering the truth*, <http://emergingtech.foe.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/FOE-GM2-Report-A4-interactive.pdf>