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Chinese want GM-free and chemical-free foods

"CHINESE SHOPPERS are clamouring for chemical-free and GM-free foods in the wake of the melamine poisoning calamity that harmed over 50,000 Chinese children," says Bass Coast Shire Councillor Gareth Barlow.

"Chinese families give the health and welfare of their only child the highest priority and they want to buy chemical-free and GM-free foods of unimpeachable quality.

"This is a huge market and we expect that Bass Coast growers can win long-term supply contracts for substantial quantities of clean, green foods because of the Shire's GM-free status.

"We've had several meetings with Chinese business people, officials and academics about buying top quality Australian food.

"They make a strong link between GM herbicide-tolerant canola and synthetic chemicals, and don't want to buy them.

"Chinese shoppers want foods that are guaranteed free of chemicals and GM," Councillor Barlow says.

"Chinese importers envisage ten year contracts on favourable terms, for assured supplies of top quality, fresh chemical-free and GM-free foods.

"GM-free and chemical-free food production definitely offers us a great competitive advantage in local and world markets as Australia is the only exporter of GM-free canola.

The shires of Bass Coast, South Gippsland, East Gippsland, Yarra Ranges and the City of Greater Bendigo have all declared themselves GM-free and are interested in reaping the benefits of Gippsland's clean, green and GM-free reputation.

"The Victorian state government should give teeth to local GM-free policies by exploring these market opportunities and reintroducing the ban on GM crops.

"Austrade and other Government trade bodies should also follow up the GM-free and chemical-free marketing opportunities in Asia.

"The majority of Australia remains GM-free, with only NSW and Victoria allowing GM canola and GM cotton on a small scale in NSW and Southern Queensland.

"These governments are out of step with the majority of Australians.

"Most Australian food processors and retailers also have GM-free policies, in response to strong shopper demand.

"For instance, Murray Goulburn has a GM-free policy which requires milk producers to certify that their animals have not been fed GM.

"These GM-free and chemical-free marketing opportunities at home and abroad are just too good to miss," Councillor Barlow concludes.

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