

Gene Ethics News Media Release 25/5/09 Tasmanian GM ban makes sense

The Tasmanian Government ban until 2014 on Genetically Manipulated (GM) crops, animals and microbes has the support of all political parties and the community. It is an economic winner for the state.

"We congratulate all Tasmanians on keeping their state GM-free for at least five more years," says Gene Ethics Director, Bob Phelps.

"The Tasmanian inquiry into GM reached all-party agreement that the ban should stay.

"This consensus was based on clear evidence that commercial GM releases pose unacceptable hazards and costs.

"Tasmania's decision will protect the integrity of its clean, green brand and increased sales of top quality GM-free foods in Australia and around the world, at premium prices.

"In contrast, NSW, Victoria and WA have sacrificed the independence of their farmers to the GM giants and the reputation of their food products.

"They are promoting failed and dangerous GM technology that offers nothing to farmers or shoppers.

"They ignored the evidence that GM cannot deliver on its promises and accepted GM industry spin, allowing GM contamination of their environments and the food supply.

"The whole of Australia should adopt Tasmania's GM-free stance and renew their bans on GM," Mr Phelps concludes.

More comment: Bob Phelps 03 9347 4500/0449 769 066

David Llewellyn, MP
Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Monday, 25 May 2009

GMO Ban Bill Passed

Tasmania's ban on the release of genetically modified organisms to the environment will continue for at least another five years under a Bill passed by Parliament.

The Minister for Primary Industries and Water, David Llewellyn, said that the State's GMO-free status is a key factor in the Tasmanian Brand.

"Tasmania's GMO-free status is a vital factor for our primary producers, helping them realise their full potential in international and interstate markets," Mr Llewellyn said.

"The decision by some other Australian states to relax their GM bans has actually increased the value of Tasmania's GMO-free status.

"It provides us with opportunities for even better Tasmanian access to prime markets.

"The hard work done over recent years has ensured that Tasmania is well placed to take full advantage of its reputation as a reliable supplier of the best and safest food."

The commercial release of genetically modified food crops is now banned until November 2014. The ban prohibits the unauthorised importation of genetically modified organisms, but does not apply to the importation of non-viable materials, such as processed animal feeds and food.

Mr Llewellyn said that the opportunities for Tasmania's primary industries, operating under the Tasmanian Brand, are exciting.

"The prime markets are demanding, and are prepared to pay for, food that is clean, green and safe.

"Tasmania is already well-positioned to meet that demand, and our decision to extend the GMO ban makes the Tasmanian Brand even stronger."

Further information:

Tasmanian Government Communications Unit
Phone: (03) 6233 6573

Simon Boughey
Senior Adviser - Minister David Llewellyn
Minister for Primary Industries and Water
1st Floor Public Buildings, Franklin Square,
Hobart, TAS 7000
Telephone 03 62336648 or mobile 0419 871 824
Fax 03 62332272
Email: Simon.Boughey@dpiw.tas.gov.au