



ABN 67 104 140 918

A: 60 Leicester St, Carlton Vic 3053

T: 03 9347 4500 / 1300 133 868

F: 03 9341 8199

E: [info@geneethics.org](mailto:info@geneethics.org)

W: [www.geneethics.org](http://www.geneethics.org)

## MEDIA RELEASE

# Unsafe GM corn approved in Australia

Wednesday, December 16, 2009: A new international study of three Monsanto genetically manipulated maize (corn) varieties shows clear evidence of health risks.

The study analysed data from 90-day rat feeding trials of: insecticide-producing Mon 810 and Mon 863 GM maize; and Roundup herbicide tolerant NK 603 GM maize. Adverse impacts were found on the kidneys, livers and the dietary detoxifying organs of experimental rats, and also some damage to heart, adrenal glands, spleen and haematopoietic system.

The research was conducted by French scientists from the universities of Caen and Rouen and is [published in the International Journal of Biological Sciences](#). The report shows the GM maize events contained novel pesticide residues that will also be present in human food and animal feed where they may pose grave health risks. As a result of the findings, the scientists are calling for an immediate prohibition on the import and cultivation of this GM maize and have strongly recommended more long-term and multi-generational animal feeding studies.

The analysis was conducted on Monsanto's own data from animal feeding tests but the scientists found the design and execution of the seed and chemical giant's trials to be seriously flawed. Once the data was analysed using improved statistical methods, it emerged clearly that male and female rats responded differently to being fed the GM maize.

The Australian food regulator, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has cleared the three maize varieties as safe for human consumption and they are allowed in our food supply. FSANZ has approved as safe every application it has received for GM foods. It does no testing of its own.

Gene Ethics director Bob Phelps says: "The precautionary principle must be applied to every new food that has not been in our food supply before, including all GM crops. Applicants must submit peer reviewed data to prove they are 100% safe. This new scientific study is the latest of many independent research findings consistently ignored by FSANZ that show some GM foods are not safe to eat.

"The methods and concepts that FSANZ uses to assess GM food safety are inconsistent, ad hoc and basically flawed. FSANZ must set scientific benchmarks and standards in its regulations that specify the scale, duration and scientific rigour required for all experiments and data submitted. The Federal Government must urgently reform the assessment process and review all GM and other new foods allowed under Food Standard 1.5. The interests of GM companies must not be put ahead of health."

*Background documents available. Australian experts available for comment.*

### **Further information or interviews:**

Vivienne Reiner, Gene Ethics media officer: (02) 9440 3545; 0432 352 132