

Margaret River GM Free has been actively researching GM crops/food almost since their inception and is concerned at the ease with which these techniques are so readily adopted by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) in Australia. Much of Europe has a much more cautious approach and we would wish that was the case in Australia.

It is our wish that:

The OGTR regulate all new GM techniques such as CRISPR and their products. These techniques and their products have not been fully tested and long term we have no idea what the final consequences could be.

We question the adoption of CRISPR (also ZFN; Talen; RNAi) methods of copying, cutting and pasting DNA. These are the codes of life. There is insufficient known about the long term effects of these revolutionary techniques.. As of now these radical new GM techniques have no history of safe use;

We urge caution here.

It is imperative that state governments retain the right to be able to continue to declare GM-free zones as has happened in SA, Tas, and the ACT. With the risks to markets if GM wheat is introduced or GM animals and insects, states must have the right to protect the increasing market value of remaining GM free. Consumers remain wary of GM and other novel techniques as there is no proof of their safety so usually prices are lower for these products. GM wheat, animals, insects etc. can be refused on marketing grounds;

All foods from CRISPR and such techniques need to be safety tested and labelled; The practice of allowing the companies selling these techniques to vouch for their safety is lazy and irresponsible of successive governments.

Organics must remain 100% guaranteed GM-free. The Australian public have made it clear time and again that this is the standard which they want. Any reduction in the quality of organic food supply would be pandering to the GM industry.

It is essential that Australia joins the UN Biosafety Protocol - a treaty under the Biodiversity Convention which aims to ensure the safe international transfer, handling and use of GM organisms.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sally Wylie

Spokesperson Margaret River GM Free