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To whom it concerns,

I do not want to eat genetically modified (GM) foods and I most certainly don't want to feed them to my growing children. In a world where chronic disease is overwhelming our health systems and everywhere you look there are people with diseases that could be avoided by going back to basics and educating on simple nutrition. In my opinion genetically modified foods do not have a place in our diet. We have no idea what these foods are doing to our bodies or if our bodies are even able to process them properly. I understand that GM foods are already in circulation but all GM foods should be independently assessed for their health and environmental hazards and risks, be labelled as GM, and be traceable. This will allow farmers, food producers, retailers, and shoppers to avoid them, for many important reasons.

Consumers need to have a choice, transparency is a must and the fact that any other option is even being considered is not ok. How can it possibly be right that some of the same companies that produce these foods are then allowed to say they are fine. When it comes back to making money, of course the companies are going to say they are safe. Why should that risk be taken, 10, 20 years down the track the damage will become evident and it will be too late. We must stop messing with nature.

I therefore strongly oppose changes to the Food Code that would allow a wide range of GM foods, made using novel methods that have scant history of safe use, to be sold without safety assessment or labelling. These would include meat and milk from some genetically modified animals and substances like vanilla and stevia produced by genetically modified microbes in factory vats. These changes would undermine FSANZ's key responsibilities to ensure food safety and our right to know what is in our food. Real food is real food and that's what our bodies need - focus need to be put on this.

Agrochemical companies cannot be trusted to self-assess the safety of GM foods as they have an appalling record of manipulating data to promote dangerous products. Why is this even being considered???

Gene editing techniques have been found to make genetic changes that could never occur in nature and to result in widespread genetic damage that often goes undetected by GM developers.

I am deeply concerned that FSANZ has relied on advice from scientists with serious conflicts of interest, to conclude these new GM foods pose no greater risks than existing foods. Those seeking to commercialise GM plants, animals and microbes should play no role in deciding how - or even whether - foods derived from them should be regulated.

The proposed changes would make Australia one of very few countries in the world to allow genetically modified animal products into our food chain with no regulation or labelling. This would put us at odds with our international trading partners, which FSANZ admits "may have a significant impact on trade". The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, an international agreement signed by 166 governments worldwide, and the UN's food standards body Codex Alimentarius agree that all GM techniques differ from conventional breeding and that pre-market safety assessments are essential before GM organisms are used in food.

I support expanding the definition for 'gene technology' so FSANZ continues to assess and regulate all techniques and methods of genetic modification, other than conventional breeding. The proposal to deregulate new and emerging GM techniques and their food products, which pose new and unassessed risks, is completely unacceptable.

Thank you for taking my well-founded and informed concerns into consideration. I look forward to hearing that FSANZ have made the right choice. Do what is right for the health of the people of Australia.

Yours sincerely,

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