

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 21 December 2015 4:50 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GM and new technologies talking points [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Importance: High

[REDACTED]

Further to your request earlier today and subsequent discussions with our Comms team seeking information on the following issues raised by the FoE, we have the following comments to make for you to provide to your MO. I note that you are aware we are now not publishing a response on our website at this time.

I have copied our MO into this email so they are aware of the text we are providing to you.

Please get back to me directly if you need anything further for the Minister on this issue.

FSANZ is being accused of looking at deregulating or undertaking a simplified form of food safety assessments for these techniques.

FSANZ has not made a decision about the legal status of new breeding techniques. The documents released to Friends of the Earth show that FSANZ has expressed an opinion, however that opinion has no legal or regulatory status. FSANZ has proposed some changes to the data requirements for GM food applications, which would have the effect of simplifying the safety assessment for certain low risk products. Some of these changes may apply to the products of certain new breeding techniques (eg cisgenesis), should FSANZ receive an application. The proposed changes to the data requirements were recently subject to public consultation and will be finalised early next year.

FoE also imply that FSANZ have misled Senate Estimates. FoE allege that FSANZ denied that experts in their expert panel overseeing these new techniques have potential conflict of interest.

FSANZ did not mislead the Senate in its response to a Question on Notice about whether the experts that participated in the 2012 and 2013 FSANZ workshops on new breeding techniques had potential conflicts of interest. The various experts hold a number of patents in their field of research, as would be expected. FSANZ is satisfied there was no conflict of interest and that its response to the Question on Notice is correct.

Regards

[REDACTED]



*A safe food supply which supports the health
of people in Australia and New Zealand*



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 21 December 2015 2:45 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GM and new technologies talking points [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

[REDACTED]

I hope you are having a great day ☺ I was just wondering if you knew when the page might be uploaded? Could it be within the hour? I am mainly interested in responding to the allegations below:

In Australia, genetically modified (GM) crops are dealt with by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) whilst the safety of GM foods is assessed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

The report "*GM 2.0 Australian regulators engineering the truth*" released by Friends of the Earth Australia (FoE) have made a claim that regulators including the OGTR and FSANZ are deregulating some new GM techniques.

In this report and in a [media release](#) from 17/12/2015, FoE claims the OGTR is in the process of drafting of legislative changes to deregulate a number of these new GM techniques. FSANZ is being accused of looking at deregulating or undertaking a simplified form of food safety assessments for these techniques. FoE also imply that the OGTR and FSANZ have misled Senate Estimates. FoE allege that the OGTR did this by stating that drafting instructions to deregulate new technologies had not been issued and that FSANZ denied that experts in their expert panel overseeing these new techniques have potential conflict of interest.

In Australia it is mandatory to label all food products which contain GM material, whether grown here or overseas. End products that do not contain any GM material, such as highly-refined oils, are exempt from the mandatory labelling regime. States and territories are responsible for the compliance and monitoring of GM food labelling.

Thanks in advance.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]