



To the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, WA Parliament.

Submission regarding the enquiry into mechanisms for compensation for economic loss to farmers in Western Australia caused by contamination by genetically modified material from Grantly Marinoni.

I am an organic farmer from Kojonup WA and have been farming organically for nearly 30 years. Over those years my biggest concerns have been the possible contamination from chemicals and more recently genetically modified material. The difference between contamination from chemicals and contamination from genetically modified materials is that there are processes in place to receive compensation for contamination from chemicals.

If my neighbour started a fire that burnt into my place and burnt my crop there is legislation in place that would allow me to receive compensation. The following year I would be able to plant another crop and things would go on as normal. If my neighbour's sheep got in and ate my crop or if there was chemical over spray from my neighbour, there is legislation in place to receive compensation and after a quarantine process I could go back to farming how I want. If however my neighbour planted a GM canola crop and some of the plants blew onto and contaminated my farm (which is what happened to Steve Marsh) I potentially could lose certification for 3 years and the seeds from the GM canola could possibly remain viable in my soil for 15 years putting me at a possible risk of further contamination. In this case I would have no avenue for compensation even though the ramifications and financial loss would be much greater. When GM canola was first introduced into WA the then Minister for Agriculture, Terry Redmond, stated that "common law" would protect anyone should they get contaminated by GM canola. As we have seen the law in no way helped Steve Marsh and the system had no intention of helping him nor did Terry Redmond or his political party.

I grow organic oats and although there are no "GM Oats" at the moment I'm in no doubt that in the future there will be. As with GM canola when GM oats is released there will be contamination to conventional oats and possibly my organic oats. And again as we have seen with GM canola, that contamination could be due to nature or human error. I rely on the income from the sale of my organic oats but if I get contaminated and lose that ability to sell my oats as organic who is going to make up the short fall. I don't believe it should be me and when conventional oats is below \$200/t and my organic oats is receiving \$675/t I would stand to lose a lot of money.

As it stands at the moment there is no ramification to the GM farmer if their GM material contaminates another farm. Not all GM farmers are the same but some have no concern for their fellow farmers and believe they can do as they want and they will continue to do so until there are measures put in place to make them accountable.

Some people in my industry have called for a tolerance level of GM material in organic products but no amount of arguing can convince me that GMOs are a natural product and therefore have no place

In an organic system. The "Organic Standards" state that "Genetically Modified Organisms or their derivatives are not permitted under this Standard for use in organically produced or processed products". These are the standards that I adhere to so why should my farming choice and livelihood be able to be compromised through contamination by another farmer with no avenue of compensation.

I believe there should be a compensation fund set up to be available to any non GM farmer that may get contaminated with a GM material. The fund should be funded by the GM seed producers, the GM farmers and the end product manufacturers. I don't like the idea of forcing another levy on farmers but where else do you get the funds. From what we were told by the multinational companies the extra production and less growing costs associated with GM canola, the GM farmer should have sufficient funds to contribute to a fund. Monsanto also appeared to have disposable funds at the time of the Baxter/Marsh case so maybe they could contribute also.

Some people have no concerns with GMO's and others don't want anything to do with GMO's and for as long as there are people who don't want GMO's, farmers should be able to produce and supply products without the fear of losing their production system or markets without proper compensation if contamination was to occur.

There is a lot of talk as to whether GMO are good or bad, safe or not and everyone has their opinion but this enquiry is not into the integrity of GMO's, it is an inquiry into "mechanism for compensation for economic loss to farmers in Western Australia caused by genetically modified material"

Thankyou for taking my submission

Grantly Marinoni