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To: submissions <submissions@foodstandards.gov.au>
Subject: Submission on labeling GE foods using new techniques

Submission on labeling GE foods using new techniques By Charles Drace, editor, Genetic Engineering Resource Book

I submit that it would be foolish to think that using new techniques would make GE food any safer when none of these techniques have been properly evaluated over the long term using the accepted standards for assessing potential harm to humans and the environment.

It is incumbent on FSANZ to use the Precautionary Principle as the first and most important criteria for any assessment made.

GE foods in general and CRISPR and other new techniques in particular, do not meet the standards of the Precautionary Principle because they have not been tested for effects on human and environmental health, particularly in the long term.

We know from previous studies that altered DNA is unstable, especially in later generations. We know that the altered DNA in foods is taken up by our organs and is passed on to our offspring. We've known that since 1994. CRISPR and other new technologies still alter DNA and no one knows if these techniques make the resulting altered DNA more or less stable in the long term and in future generations. No one knows how altered DNA will react to other influences like other health problems and the environmental effects on DNA that are evident from current studies.

We've known for years, courtesy of many independent studies, that GE food currently on our market shelves causes tumours and interferes with our reproductive systems.

What we don't know is what effects GE foods will have on health and the environment over the long term because long term studies have not been made.

This is especially true of CRISPR and other new techniques.

We know GE foods cause health problems in the short term so we must expect even greater health problems over the long term.

CRISPR and other new techniques should be kept in the lab until long term studies have been made. Any other approach is irresponsible.

Therefore it is incumbent on FSANZ to not give in to pressure from agri-chemical companies and to place the Precautionary Principle above all other considerations when making judgements about GE food and GE technologies.

I submit that all GE foods produced by any technology be labelled and that GE food produced through using CRISPR and other new technologies must carry a warning saying these foods have not been tested or evaluated for long term health effects.

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"Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and decisions, and she has more votes, a longer memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do." Wendell Berry

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." John Muir