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To whom it concerns,

I am writing this email as I'm very concerned about the potential changes that may introduce rules that will weaken the food safety. People are keen to eat food that is safe - any changes made to food safety to admit foods that are yet to be declared completely safe is a dangerous precedent. It will also affect health in a big way.

Polling shows most Australians, and global citizens don't want to eat genetically modified (GM) foods. 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.

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.

I personally do not trust the agrochemical companies to self-assess the safety of GM foods as they have an appalling record of manipulating data to promote dangerous products. This process of self assessment has been seen to fail in many fields like in the private seniors homes during the COVID-19 spread in Australia.

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 internationally one of very few countries 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.

I fear that these alterations may put in danger many people's health who may think that they are purchasing safe foods. This has potential to make the food regulations unacceptable and untrustworthy

Thank you for taking my well-founded and informed concerns into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

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