

For more than 20 years, the Australian Democrats have questioned and fought against the introduction of genetically modified (GM) crops and foods in Australia.

We have introduced legislation for the labeling of foods containing GM ingredients, have argued for a moratorium on GM crops and introduced legislation to extend South Australia's moratorium out to 2013.

A recent "Australian Story" on ABC-TV linking genetically-modified eucalypts with downstream pollution underlined many of the questions and concerns the Australian Democrats have about this technology, and strengthens the arguments for the precautionary principle here.

The Federal Government has so far approved GM soybean, canola, corn, potato, sugarbeet, wheat, lucerne and rice for consumption in Australia. Labeling is only required where new DNA and or new protein is present in the final food or where the food has altered characteristics. This leaves GM products like breakfast cereals, breads, cakes, biscuits, sauces, cooking oils, margarine spreads, confectionery, chocolate and snack foods unlabelled, taking the choice away from consumers.

A Commonwealth review of GM food labeling, due to report in 2011, appears to be more about reducing the regulatory burden on business than protecting public health and safety.

# ..... still wary of **Genetically modified crops**

## Our Plan

- A wider application of the **precautionary principle** for health and environmental effects before GMOs are approved
- The onus on **proving products are safe** put on the manufacturer, rather than the consumer having to prove they are dangerous and GMO release approvals included in the Federal Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act
- Thorough and **independent testing** required on foods with GM components, as for new drug testing before coming onto the market, paid for by agrochemical companies.
- Improved legal supervision of genetic contamination, including a **strict liability** framework that details who is liable for damage and removal of genetic contamination
- Legislative **protection against agrochemical companies being able to sue** non-GM farmers when GM seedlings ingress onto their properties.
- An **opt-out** provision in the Gene Technology Act for states that choose to remain free of GMOs
- Substantially increased funding for **research** on long term health and environmental impacts
- **Buffer zones** of up to one kilometer imposed around properties growing GM crops and the location of all GM crops made public.
- **Food labeling** to reveal if any component of a product or process used has a GM origin, including meat from animals fed GM feed and additives such as flavours.
- Australia to sign the **Biosafety (Cartagena) Protocol**.