

Email Submission: Antoinette Clements

Submission to the Australian Gene Technology Regulator re deregulation of gene technology

This is a decision with unimaginably far-reaching ramifications, and I urge the Regulator to act with appropriate caution. Our knowledge of the complexities of existing genomes is in its infancy. The inter-relationships of genes need to be far better understood before it could be considered safe to tamper with them. It is now recognised that genes have multiple functions and that they inter-communicate, so artificial genetic modification is fraught with the possibility of unintended consequences.

Numerous studies have indicated that existing GM foods are safe for humans and animals, but these are short term studies. Generational studies reveal a far more worrying picture - infertility in pigs (false pregnancies), growth retardation and tumours in rats, for example.

The submission by Professor Jill Gready of the ANU is compelling. None of the 4 options is desirable. European and Russian governments are showing considerable caution towards gene technology. We have no right to make unilateral regulations about a technology that could spread around the world.

It is notable that the submissions that favour deregulation are those of organisations which stand to profit by it. This is a much bigger issue than short-term profit. I am implacably opposed to deregulation.

Antoinette Clements