



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## GM legislation needs reviewing

Australia's leading organic group says today's decision highlights the difficulties legislation has in keeping up with new technologies.

Today the Western Australian Supreme Court rejected certified organic farmer Steve Marsh's bid for compensation. Marsh attempted to sue his neighbour Michael Baxter for GM contamination on his property in 2010.

Australian Organic owns the Australian Certified Organic logo, which certifies the majority of organic products on our shelves. Australian Organic wants to see a review of the laws and related codes affecting GM production to protect the interests of all farmers. Underpinning the code of practice for GM growing with legislation would help prevent issues like this happening in future.

Increasing land buffer zones between properties and changing harvesting practices would help to reduce genetic contamination risks.

Chair of Australian Organic Dr Andrew Monk says, "Unfortunately there are two losers in this case. It's really sad to see two neighbours go to court when there should have been enough precautions in place before crops were even put in the ground."

"Unfortunately GM technology has imposed some significant additional risk management and testing requirements on the organic sector. GM testing has joined the ranks of the pesticide and herbicide tests that we already do."

Today's court decision does not change the fact that many consumers don't want to eat foods that contain GM.

Australian Organic will continue to stand by the *Australian Certified Organic Standard*, which prohibits the use of GM materials. Organic food gives people a choice about what they eat.

Dr Monk says, "Growing food without synthetic chemicals, without cages and without the use of hormones, antibiotics and GM is not an ideology - it's a right that all farmers should naturally have - and in farming this way they're meeting consumer expectations."

According to IBISWorld organic farming is one of the Australian economy's best performing agricultural industries and due to consumer demand is expected to grow by 50% over the next five years.

The *Australian Organic Market Report* shows 62% of organic consumers buy organic because it's non GM. Despite some countries accepting adventitious contamination of GM, the international marketplace generally demands organic products to be non GM, particularly our key markets Korea and Japan.

"It's not ideological to meet consumer expectations, it's good business sense," says Dr Monk.

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