



# MEDIA RELEASE

10 February 2014

## No winners in GM court case

Australia's leading organic group says this week's court case in Western Australia between an organic grain farmer and his neighbour won't result in any winners.

Chair of Australian Organic, Dr Andrew Monk, says it is regrettable to see neighbour pitted against neighbour.

Australian Organic owns the Australian Certified Organic logo, which appears on the majority of organic products on our shelves. The *Australian Certified Organic Standard*, which determines how certified organic products are to be grown and manufactured doesn't allow for any genetically modified organisms in the production process or end organic products.

Dr Monk says, "Organic standards around the world prohibit GMOs based on the precautionary principle, assessed need and because the majority of organic consumers expect organic products to be non GMO."

The most recent *Australian Organic Market Report* shows 62% of organic consumers buy organic because it's non GM.

GM labeling laws aren't comprehensive. Some ingredients may still be derived from GMO crops without being labeled. With its clear standards and ban on GMOs, consumers have an informed choice if they are seeking non GMO products by looking for the Australian Certified Organic logo on products.

Dr Monk says, "The *Australian Certified Organic Standard* responds to consumer demands. We don't think it's unreasonable to deliver a non GMO product if that is what consumers are demanding."

Despite some countries accepting adventitious contamination of GMOs, the international marketplace generally demands organic products that are non GMO.

"What is reasonable is to think that farmers can talk to each other and come to an acceptable solution that reduces the risk of cross contamination – whether that be from agrichemical drift spray or GM pollen.

"The concern for producers however is the potential for GMO contamination to occur beyond the immediate neighbourhood or farm boundaries, similar to some agrichemicals."

Increasing land buffer zones between properties and changing harvest practices may reduce genetic contamination risks.

Additional costs of risk management and testing are born by organic producers who may be impacted by genetically 'leaky' crops such as canola.

Dr Monk says, "What we would like to see come out of the Western Australian case is a willingness for farming neighbours to talk to each other and strike acceptable agreements that allow them to farm the way they want to farm without it jeopardising their neighbours' business and without destroying neighbour and community relationships.

"Australian Organic will continue to work with our members and clients to ensure their livelihoods are not put at risk, while also ensuring that organic products wearing the Australian Certified Organic logo remain non GMO, as organic consumers expect."

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