



## **Australian Organic taking action for farmers and consumers on GMOs**

### **Australian Organic responds to non-GMO claims**

**May, 2015:** Over the past few weeks Australian Organic has been made aware of false claims made against us in regards to a submission made by Australian Organic to the OISCC (the Organic Industry Standards and Certification Council) relating to the issue of certified organic farms exposed to GMO from neighbouring lands.

Australian Organic would like to now respond to make our position clear and to clarify any misguided claims that have been mentioned across social media.

Australian Organic will always **fiercely defend our members' organic farming activities** and be a leader in protecting consumer interest and **deliver non GMO organic products**.

Australian Organic has submitted a request to change the guidelines for one key reason only:

**To protect our precious Australian certified organic farmers.**

These changes DO NOT allow for GMOs to be present in any certified organic products or crops. These changes simply allow for us to protect our farmers should a situation arise.

GMOs have no part in organic farm systems. This is etched into each and every organic standard worldwide.

We deliver on this via our audits, testing, and occasionally in decertifying products not found to be in compliance with this. This will continue with a zero tolerance for GMOs in Australian Certified Organic products that consumers purchase.

The growing presence of GMOs in Australia has forced our industry to begin to face what is unfortunately common internationally. Our local farmers are now facing the potential for genetic flow of GMOs onto their own farm system.

Australian Organic is fighting to ensure our standards remain:

- Non GMO – with no acceptable level for organic crops or product;
- Protecting our farmers – removing the fear and uncertainty.

Australian Organic doesn't want to see our members risk the loss of their certification; lose their farms; lose their lifestyle over a situation that is out of their control. Australian Organic wants to ensure that we can protect and support any farmers that might find themselves in this unfortunate position; while still maintaining our non GMO position.





## PRESS RELEASE

We have taken actions to ensure our farmers can continue to farm organically without fear of losing their livelihoods. The cost of removing any GMO plants from organic farm land we believe should remain legally borne by those who have created that situation. This is being tested in Law.

We remain fiercely in defence of our farmers reserving the right to take action to recoup costs from a neighbour should GMOs enter their farm. We have no intent to reduce this right.

We will not permit any interest group or activist lobby neither undermine or put at risk the livelihoods of our farmers nor wedge our farmers in a fight not of their making. We believe that our well informed membership will see through this for what it is, and see through the misinformation.

This is a complex issue to deal with for the industry there is no doubt. Our organisation stands for transparency in standard setting, in a technically and legally enforceable standard, and one that delivers certainty and predictability for those who use it.

A submission before OISCC (the Organic Industry Standards and Certification Council) was part of a discussion document for a uniform approach, delivering more certainty for our farmers.

Australian Organic will always stand up for and fight for our hard working organic farm families so we see more, not less, organic farming land in Australia in the years ahead. The environment, our farmers and consumers all win.

Interviews are available on request. Please contact Amanda Kuhn via email ([amanda@missymischief.com](mailto:amanda@missymischief.com)) or on 0410 570 993.

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