

[View this email in your browser](#)

[ABOUT OANZ](#) | [OUR WORK](#) | [LATEST NEWS](#) | [DONATE](#)



Media Statement | 4 November 2024

Genetic Engineering Reforms Risk Making NZ an Outlier

A recent fact-finding mission to Wellington to understand the impact of the government's proposed reforms to New Zealand's regulation of genetic engineering suggests the country could be heading into risky, uncharted territory in terms of the release of GMOs into the environment.

The mission included meetings with three ministries, two ministers, multiple political parties and a presentation of findings to the [Primary Production Select Committee](#), and was focused on the implications for the food and fibre sector of proposed changes.

"To date we had been left out of the discussion and what we learned was that reform proposals are likely to shift New Zealand from having a high level of precaution to leapfrogging all other global regulatory frameworks to become an outlier with potentially fewer protections than countries with established GMO producers," said delegate Brendan Hoare, Managing Director of Buy Pure New Zealand, and spokesperson on GE for Organics Aotearoa New Zealand (OANZ).

"These proposed changes aren't, as touted by proponents, a catch-up to align us with countries that permit GMO production—they're a leap into the unknown, with no thorough understanding of the science, and no assurance of safety for our ecosystems and communities," he said.

Of particular concern is the fact that no economic assessment of the potential impacts of these regulatory changes has been conducted, and that it appears that no intention exists on the part of government to conduct such an assessment.

"We get that this is a complex issue, with science that takes time to get your head around, but what we found was little co-ordination between the affected Ministries, a low level of scientific literacy and a poor understanding amongst Ministers as to the implications of the proposed changes," said Mr Hoare.

"It felt like we were piecing together a picture to help inform decision makers."

Delegate Tiffany Tompkins, CE of OANZ, said: "It appears that our policymakers have been sold on promises of a 'magic box of tricks'. Yet, we have more than 30 years of evidence showing that the supposed benefits of GE have not been realised, and its risks remain unresolved."

"New Zealand seems to be heading towards a world-first level of deregulation of genetically engineered organisms, a stance that our major trading partners have not been willing to adopt. We want to know what is motivating such a radical change," said Ms Tompkins.

"New Zealand is being encouraged to become a global guinea pig in the experimental use of this technology, despite the country's reliance on primary export industries in food and fibre," she said.

The delegation included commercial vegetable grower and blueberry farmer Scott Lawson from True Earth Organics who reminded officials that, "As a commercial vegetable grower who is certified organic, GE/GMOs are not permitted in the organic supply chain."

products, making it impossible to identify GE ingredients in the food supply.

“Without traceability, New Zealand’s trusted brand—an essential pillar of our agricultural exports and global reputation as a safe, clean food source—faces serious risk,” Mr. Lawson warned. “This is not just a minor technical adjustment; it represents a potentially irreversible change that could endanger all of our primary sector exports, including the \$1 billion organic industry. Such a shift could inflict lasting harm on our land and reputation, eroding the natural trading advantage that we so deeply value.”

The delegation is calling on Parliament to take a more informed and cautious approach that is inclusive, secures the participation of all stakeholders, lifts the literacy of all affected parties, aligns with global standards and considers the long-term impacts on New Zealand’s environment, food systems, and international standing as a clean, green producer.

It is also advising the broader food and fibre sector, vital to New Zealand’s export earnings, to pay close attention to the proposed reforms to ensure their existing strategies and interests are not put at risk.

For further information:

Brendan Hoare: 027 2888618 – General Manger, Buy Pure New Zealand
(Spokesperson)

Tiffany Tompkins: 021 990288 – Chief Executive, Organics Aotearoa New Zealand

Scott Lawson: 027 4446267 – True Earth Organics

Resources:

Presentation to Primary Production Select Committee:

<https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/scl/primary-production/news-archive/watch-public-meetings-of-the-primary-production-committee/>

Previous Press Release: <https://www.oanz.org/new-blog/new-gene-technology-rules-discussion-welcomed>

ENDS



OANZ ORGANICS AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND | **WEBINAR BRIEFING**

**What's at Stake:
Implications of Radical
Gene Tech Reforms**

DATE
07 Nov 2024

TIME
7.30 - 8.30 PM

REGISTER NOW!

Join us for an essential discussion on the government's plans regarding GE deregulation. Organics Aotearoa New Zealand (OANZ) will share valuable insights from its recent delegation to Wellington, where we advocated for a more transparent, inclusive, and informed approach to GE regulation.

Learn about the key findings from our meetings with government officials and stakeholders, and understand the significant risks that GE deregulation poses to New Zealand’s environment and agricultural sectors.

Don't miss this opportunity to stay informed and engaged!

[Register Now!](#)



**DEFEND OUR FARMS, PROTECT OUR
FUTURE, SAY NO TO GE!**



ORGANICS
AOTEAROA
NEW ZEALAND

**Growing the Organic Sector through leadership
and support for projects and policies that are
good for Aotearoa.**

[OUR WORK](#)



Copyright © 2024 OANZ, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

