

Stakeholder comments

Draft review of import conditions of brassicaceous vegetable seeds for sowing

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According to the Sydney Morning Herald of 2 April 2018:

"The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has proposed compulsory fungicide treatment on a host of vegetable seeds entering Australia, saying increasing globalisation of the vegetable seed trade, among other factors, has brought a heightened risk of pathogens entering the country."

This proposal, if implemented, would cause a dramatic fall in the number of organic seeds and vegetables available, as in order to be classified as "organic", seeds and vegetables must be chemical-free. I note that the proposal seeks blanket spraying of some seeds without so much as testing, in order to ascertain whether these seeds are in fact affected by fungus or other pathogens. As Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources you should be getting your information from those at the coal face, like farmers and not those who are biased and have ulterior motives for their actions. In respect to the latter, I am referring to the likes of Monsanto.

The Department should offer an organic alternative to mandatory fungicide treatment, such as seed testing. To not even suggest this, is clearly a proposal designed to harm the Organic Food Industry. This proposal will affect a large number of Organic Food producers as well as exporters and will consequently damage the export trade in organic food: This latter proposal should bother you even if nothing else does!

Australian Certified Organic general manager Sachin Ayachit, whose organisation is the nation's largest organic certifier, said the change would have a seismic effect on the industry. He said there were few certified organic seed suppliers in Australia, and so consumers "may not have certified organic products [available] in the categories that are under review" by the department.

While certifiers could provide exemptions - allowing produce from seed that had undergone mandatory fungicide treatment to still be classed as organic - this defeated the intent of the standard and defied consumer expectations, he said. (Sydney Morning Herald 2 April 2018)

As a consumer, I want to have food that does not contain chemicals and is in its least spoiled form. This is the food humans have consumed for centuries. Now that we have a WTO and Multinational Corporations, the interests of the consumer have been rendered subordinate by bureaucrats such as those in your Department, who apparently consider the welfare of the general public to be the furthest concern from their minds and your Government's platform. You are an elected official and as such you are here to serve the public, that is, you are public servants not the public's masters!

This proposal will cause a sharp rise in the cost of untreated seeds, thus making organic produce more expensive. Have you failed to notice that your constituents want to buy organic food? Even the many of those who are largely uneducated oppose the interference with their foodstuffs, hence the increase in organic food producers. See:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212567115012198>

This move is excessive, unwarranted and Draconian! It is clearly being done for ulterior motives, in other words to serve Monsanto and other corporations. My late father gave five years of his life, fighting in World War 2 so that we wouldn't be ruled by corporations. Apparently his sacrifice and those of his generation has been in vain. Shame on you!