



Western Graingrowers

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Organic Conundrum

GM growers at Moodiarup (NW of Kojonup) have been accused of "contaminating" their neighbours' organic farm to the east. We have actively, publicly and proudly supported the GM growers.

John Snooke, WGG GM Spokesman, makes the following important points:

All GM grain, prior to being released commercially, was rigorously assessed by Australia's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) and deemed as safe for the environment and human health as conventional grain.

The GM producer has done nothing wrong. He followed all the rules and produced his GM crop in a responsible and appropriate way.

The National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) is the certifying body for Marsh, the organic farmer. They have imposed upon themselves and their members an impossible standard of "zero." This is fundamentally contra to the unwritten tenet amongst property owners of "live and let live." We all put up with some impact and inconvenience from our neighbours.

PGA is a strong advocate for strong private property rights. We're not opposed to people farming in whatever way they wish. But we fail ourselves and the consumers of the world if we continue to silently allow the promotion of one method of production through the defamation of other methods with less than honest, obscure, ad hominem attacks.

GM Producers Defence Fund

PGA has set up a legal defence fund, and we will work diligently to secure donations to support the defence of the Baxters. We will also continue to provide moral support through media releases and interviews.

To donate, please contact Sandy Hayter on 9479 4599. To discuss this issue, feel free to ring John Snooke on 0417 964 362 or Janet Thompson on 0417 815 595.

CBH Structure

After waiting with bated breath for the announcement of which of the three "restructure options" CBH would choose, they announced that there would be no change: a non-distributing co-op structure will continue.

PGA has been vocally critical of the façade of consultation and "restructure" on which CBH expended significant grower-shareholder resources. We have experienced growing support for our position, as farmers increasingly realise that "their" CBH is not really theirs, and that the Board and Management refuse to seriously consider the only option that will ensure future success: demutualisation.

Demutualisation

1. recognises and gives access to shareholders' equity;
2. allows for that equity to be accessed without capital being withdrawn from the company;
3. gives the company greater access to debt markets and more flexibility to access capital through equity funding;

4. forces a modernisation from an archaic cost-plus business model to a competitive service culture; and thereby
5. reduces the need for duplication of facilities that growers have already funded.

ACCC Grain Express Draft Decision

On 6 December, ACCC released a draft decision which proposes to revoke the *Grains Express* exclusive dealing notification lodged by Cooperative Bulk Handling Ltd (CBH).

An ACCC-convened conference was held in Perth on 20 January. PGA was represented by Gary McGill and Janet Thompson. Support of the ACCC's decision was expressed by at least 50% of the 50 attendees, 10 of whom were CBH employees.

Minister for Agriculture Senator Joe Ludwig announced in November that reforms would be made to ensure "Better Regulation of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals." Upon perusal of the discussion paper, our committee became alarmed that the process is being driven by environmental extremists, and deemed a submission necessary.

The submission can be found at <http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/food/regulation-safety/ag-vet-chemicals/better-regulation-of-ag-vet-chemicals>. At the bottom, click "responses to the discussion paper."