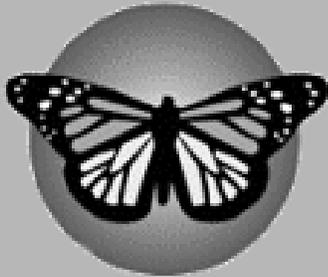


September

2000



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

# GE FREE NEW ZEALAND (RAGE) IN FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT INC

## ROYAL COMMISSION UPDATE

On 7 August, 2000 in Wellington, Sir Thomas Eichelbaum spoke at the opening of the three day scoping meetings of the Royal Commission, which were held in Wellington.

The scoping meetings were held to encourage public feedback and contribution to the issues which the Commission would address during the year long inquiry.

Sir Thomas Eichelbaum outlined many points in his speech, regarding how the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification would conduct its activities over the next year.

Some of the key points from the Commissioner's speech were:

- It is expected that there will be a great amount of interest in

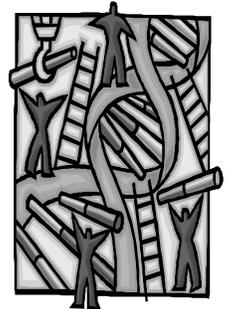
this Commission both in New Zealand and overseas, because it is the first of its kind in the world on Genetic Engineering.

- The final decisions on what happens with the future of this technology will rest with the New Zealand Government.
- It is possible that the decisions made from this Commission may be irreversible.
- The Royal Commission on Genetic Modification represents an independent body to investigate and report on the issues.
- The processes for the Royal Commission where possible, will be open and in public.

- The process for filing submissions will be announced in due course.
- The Commission will consult and engage with Maori.

From The Commission's Opening Statement, 7/8/00, Sir Thomas Eichelbaum

[www.gmcommission.govt.nz](http://www.gmcommission.govt.nz)



*This Commission will make a significant contribution to the future of Genetic Engineering Technology in NZ.*

### THE ROYAL COMMISSION IS HERE... NOW'S THE TIME TO ACT!

At long last, the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification is here and up and running. After an initial set up time, the Commission has set out its scheduled hearings and is taking submissions from the public.

The website of the Royal

Commission can be found on <http://www.gmcommission.govt.nz/> and contains lots of information about the Commission itself, its activities, and the process and deadlines for submission.

For the public, submissions

must be to the Commission by 1 December.

So start now and get your submission in.

Contained in this edition are some helpful tips on writing submissions.

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#### WRITE A SUBMISSION NOW

**Not on the Internet?** Ask the Royal Commission for a hard copy of their information pack for general public submitters.

PO Box 3554  
Wellington  
Ph 04 4959151

**SUBMISSIONS MUST BE IN TO THE COMMISSION BY 1 DECEMBER 2000**

# The Annual General Meeting – Sunday 27 August

The first Annual General Meeting of GE Free New Zealand (RAGE) In Food and Environment Inc was held on Sunday 27 August at 10am. Enclosed in this mailout is a copy of the annual report and the annual financial report for members to read. The new positions and current positions appointed were:

**President:** Mary Anne Howard-Clarke (Wellington); **National Spokesperson:** Jon Carapiet (Auckland); **National Secretary:** Susie Lees (Nelson); **National**

**Treasurer:** Jon Muller (Wellington); **National Co-Ordinator:** Claire Southward (Wellington); **Christchurch Co-Ordinator:** Paul de Spa.

**Changes to Constitution:** NEW POSITIONS: **Kapiti Co-Ordinator:** Ian Melrose; **Rotorua Co-Ordinator:** Allan Williams; **Nelson Co-Ordinator:** Peter Gorig; **Northland Co-Ordinator:** Marty Robinson; **Maori Co-Ordinator:** Dianna Tawharu.

Further changes: The Management Committee Members can vote by way of email or conference call provided the Committee members know of the vote.

**Memberships Categories:** Monthly Supporter, Unwaged, Single, Family, Organisation, Corporate, Lifetime. Membership automatic if give donation above membership fee unless otherwise specified.

## GE TREES – THE LATEST IN BIOTECHNOLOGY

Trees are the latest plant to be subjected to genetic engineering in the biotechnology world. Despite the beginning of the Royal Commission, two applications have been received by ERMA (Environmental Risk Management Authority) for the field trials of genetically engineered trees.

The Forest Research Institute has applied to plant two different types of genetically engineered trees: herbicide resistant pine and spruce trees and pine trees modified to mature quickly or to be sterile.



We will give you the result of this application when it is released.

Genetically engineered trees are particularly worrying for many reasons including:

- \* The field trials are long in duration, up to 20 years.
- \* There has been no independent testing on the safety of these trees in the environment.
- \* The world is rapidly turning against genetically engineered crops. New Zealand has a high wood export market, this may be damaged once we begin growing these trees here.

*The field trials are long in duration, up to 20 years.....*

- \* Pollen from pine trees travels great distances, up to 600kms. It is impossible to 100% guarantee the containment of this pollen in any field trial.

Trees, food crops, animals. At what point will the biotechnology companies draw the line?

This technology has the potential to genetically engineer every living thing on earth.

And that is a very sobering thought.

## GE FREE NEW ZEALAND – OUR OBJECTIVES

A big welcome to all of our new members! For those of you who aren't familiar with our objectives, we thought we would put them in this newsletter.

GE Free New Zealand is a nation-wide, non-political and non-profit organisation. We were formerly known as RAGE.

GE Free New Zealand represents more than 120 consumer groups as well as thousands of individual members.

GE Free New Zealand has been approved for "Interested Person Status" for the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification.

We are not opposed to the use of the

technology of genetic engineering in the field of medicine, if such use means that the benefits are outweighed by any risks. Our vision for New Zealand is a genetically engineered-free food and environment.

Our aim is to promote understanding of genetic engineering and its individual and global implications, to enable people to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions.

GE Free New Zealand is concerned at the use of genetic engineering technology in the food chain and the environment.

We are concerned at the speed of genetic-engineering technology and the lack of

independent research on safety.

We consider that it is vital for a moratorium to be put in place on all genetically engineered food products and on the release of all genetically engineered organisms into the environment.

We believe that a moratorium is necessary until sufficient long term and independent knowledge has been acquired to make it possible to judge if it is justifiable and safe for our health and environment to exploit this technology.

# Have Your Say - Writing a Simple Submission

Writing a submission isn't difficult. There are two different types of submissions, simple & substantive. This article covers some tips for simple submissions, and the article below looks at writing a substantive submission.

## Tips for Writing a Simple Submission

The following guidelines are taken from Amp's website. Amp seeks to encourage public participation in the Royal Commission. To be effective, a simple submission needs to be written as clearly as possible. You can write it as a letter to the Commission if you want. A simple submission is most powerful when you speak from your heart or personal experience. You do not need to use jargon or scientific research, you can just say what you feel or want. If

you feel strongly about this issue, let your submission show your passion. Make sure you:

- include your name and address
- use one side of A4 paper
- write or print clearly: or
- use a large clear font
- indicate if you want to make an oral submission also



*Submissions are easy to write, and enable you to tell the Commission your views on genetic engineering*

The most important thing to do when

writing a simple submission is to begin with a statement that summarises your key message to the Royal Commission.

This key message should sum up, in one sentence, what you want the Commission to decide.

The key message statement may take longer to write than the rest of the submission, but a very simple submission could be just that one sentence, supporting the key message.

The rest of the submission can justify, explain or clarify your key message.

Make each point as clear and concise as you can. Use bullet points and headings rather than long paragraphs of text.

See Amp's Website for more information at <http://www.amp.wellington.net.nz>

## Key Message

# Have Your Say - Writing a Substantive Submission

## Tips for Writing a Substantive Submission - (from Amp's Website)

An effective substantive submission must develop a logical argument backed up with robust research, so you will need to back up your arguments with relevant articles and research, and reference them.

### **Writing a summary**

A substantive submission will have more impact if it begins with a summary of the key message and the supporting points. The key message should sum up, in one sentence or a short paragraph, what you want the commission to decide.

## **The body**

- Use headings and bullet points to break up the text
- Double check all for your references for accuracy
- Don't plagiarise, as this undermines the credibility of your argument
- Proof read closely

*"While substantive submissions carry more weight, even the simplest submission is unique and valuable as it serves as an indicator of public opinion."*

If you are making a substantive submission, contact Amp to ensure coordinated coverage of all the issues. While substantive submissions carry more weight, even the simplest submission is unique and valuable as it serves as an indicator of public opinion. See Amp's Website for more information at <http://www.amp.wellington.net.nz>

# Have Your Say - Why?

Writing a submission to the Royal Commission will play a direct and important part in determining the future of genetic engineering in New Zealand.

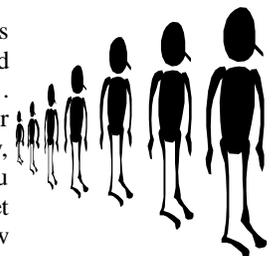
It is crucial that New Zealanders let the Royal Commission know what they think. It is more than likely that this will be our ONLY chance to have our say in the future of this technology in New Zealand.

Your voice and views on this topic WILL make a difference.

Your submission IS vital. The strength of one voice is very powerful. The strength of many voices together have immense power to bring about change and action.

There will never be a better time than NOW.

So get your pens and paper, and get writing. Tell your friends, family, everyone you know and let them know about the power that they hold to make a real dif-



*The strength of public opinion is very powerful. It has the ability to make real changes.*

## Claire Southward – National Co-Ordinator

Hello everyone. My name is Claire Southward and I am the National Co-Ordinator for GE Free New Zealand (RAGE) In Food and Environment Inc.

I have a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Masters Applied degree in Social Work.

Currently I am paid to work for GE Free New Zealand for 20 hours per week.

My involvement with GE Free New Zealand has been varied and extensive over the last 2 1/2 years. My own interest in GE foods was sparked primarily because I am a vegetarian and I heard about genetically engineered soybeans.

I began to investigate more about ge foods and what I found out alarmed me so much that I wanted to take some action. I joined the Wellington Branch of RAGE (as it was called then) and started going to the weekly meetings.

Soon, I found myself appointed as Secretary, and then National Secretary. Back then, we all worked long hours on the campaign with virtually no funds and little public awareness.

Since then the amount of public concern has grown hugely as has the organisation itself.

In addition, I co-authored a chapter with Mary Anne Howard-Clarke in the New Zealand book, *Designer Genes – The New Zealand Guide to the Issues and Facts about Genetic Engineering*, (2000), ed. Ray Prebble, Dark Horse Publishing, Wellington. Our chapter was called “Why RAGE?” and outlined the history of the campaign and health and environmental concerns about genetically engineered food.

In my role, I am involved in a variety of tasks with the organisation. Including:

- ⇒ The co-ordination of our strategy for the Royal Commission and liaising with other groups who are also involved.
- ⇒ Liaising with all of the Regional Co-Ordinators to ensure nationwide communication.
- ⇒ Co-ordinating and sending out press releases when required.

- ⇒ Writing and distributing the national newsletter.
- ⇒ Co-ordinating national actions, demonstrations, submissions.
- ⇒ Co-ordinating fundraising strategies, offering suggestions for new strategies.
- ⇒ Co-ordinating public meetings of speakers for GE Free New Zealand.
- ⇒ Amending Constitution Document as agreed at AGMs.
- ⇒ Liaising with members to give them necessary information to contact their Regional Co-Ordinators.

Well that’s about all from me, any queries I can be contacted on [elis@paradise.net.nz](mailto:elis@paradise.net.nz) or (04) 475-9346 (phone number to be changing soon).

## Susie Lees – National Secretary

*Susie Lees is the National Secretary for GE Free New Zealand and heavily involved in both the running of the National Office and GE Free Nelson.*

After emigrating to NZ in 97, I visited Nelson, and found a genetic engineering leaflet published by the Nelson Environment Centre (NEC), that one event changed my life.

Concerned about risks to the environment from genetic engineering, I became involved in telephone polls, making props, organising actions and meetings, and writing submissions to ANZFA and ERMA. A steep learning curve and a full time voluntary job!

I attended the first ERMA hearings on GE organisms whilst working as artist in residence, these interests combined to

result in an exhibition of delicate woven pieces with a political anti GE statement at the Suter Gallery.

Frustrated by the denial of the National Government to act, we began promoting a GE Free Nelson, to raise public awareness, designing and distributing bumper stickers, and placing petitions in public places.

October saw a change of government, promising a Royal Commission, RAGE became GE Free NZ and Nelson, the National Office, producing newsletters. Christmas saw Nelson council vote 6/5 against the instigation of a GE Free zone, however we continue presenting signa-

tures, (now approx. 6000 ) and Nelson has achieved interested party status at the Royal Commission.

We hope to adequately represent all those people who believe that GE Free is the future for Nelson and all New Zealand.

*....I visited Nelson, and found a genetic engineering leaflet ..... that one event that changed my life*



*A GE Free New Zealand gives our country the best future, ecologically and economically.*

## News Snippets From Overseas

### Birds could be under threat by GE plants

Andrew Watkinson and a team of scientists in Norwich, used a computer model which theoretically predicts the impact of GE sugar beet on wild birds skylarks.

The model found that chemical methods of herbicides used with the genetically engineered crops could be too efficient at controlling weeds and leave the birds with not enough wild seeds to eat.

The flow on effect of this may threaten the skylark and greater wild bird population in Britain if the crops are used widely.

*"GM crops 'could put bird life in jeopardy'", The Independent, Steve Connor,*



*Science Editor, 1 September 2000.*

### People and animals could be affected by eating GE

#### Food

Research from the University of Jena in Germany shows that the genes from genetically engineered plants can cross over into other species of

wildlife.

This three year study adds weight to arguments that people could be affected by eating GE foods.

The study *"has found that bees take up engineered genes from oilseed rape"* (*Independent, 28 May 2000*).

*"GM genes 'can spread to people and animals'", The Independent, Geoffrey*

*"...genes from genetically engineered plants can cross over into other species of wildlife"*

*Lean, Volker Angres, and Louise Jury, 28 May 2000.*

## COWS WITH HUMAN GENES.....

The application from AgResearch to genetically engineer cattle with human genes was approved on 25 July 2000. The research was approved despite the voluntary moratorium on new research which is in place under after the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification makes it's recommendations.

"The engineering of animals is the greatest immediate threat to human health of all GE research, because it opens up the species barrier between humans and cat-

tle, with the potential to create new diseases. With the current state of understanding of this science, these problems are not predictable. AgResearch and ERMA are playing dice with New Zealand's microbial ecosystem." said Stephen Blackheath of GE Free New Zealand.

Ngati Wairere, the Tainui hapu which claims mana whenua over the land on which the research will be carried out, requested more research into the risks.

*"...it opens up the species barrier between humans and cattle, with the potential to create new diseases...."*

*Taken from "ERMA Approves Cattle with Human Genes", Press Release GE Free New Zealand, 25 July 2000.*

## THE LEGAL CHALLENGE TO THE COW DECISION

GE-Free New Zealand (RAGE) In Food and Environment Incorporated is welcoming legal action in the Wellington High Court to overturn the approval of experiments to put human genes in cows. The move by law firm Walters Williams and Co, has been made on behalf of an individual, and is also expected to be supported by other groups including Maori.

The legal case challenges ERMA (The Environmental Risk Management Authority) on its evaluation of the proposal and the balance of risk, costs and bene-

fits.

The proposed experiment is believed to have applications far beyond medical research, including plans for altering milk used in dairy products. This raises concerns for New Zealand's export industry based on its 'clean, green' image, and the possible economic damage.

*Taken from Press Release – "Legal Action May Block GE Risk to Dairy Industry", GE Free New Zealand, 29 August 2000*



**There are concerns for our export industry based upon our clean, green image.**

*Disclaimer: We are not liable for any error, omission of fact, or misinterpretation of the information given in this publication, nor action taken upon the information given*

**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

**GE FREE NEW ZEALAND  
P.O.Box 693, Nelson**

***GE FREE NEW ZEALAND (RAGE) In  
Food and Environment Inc***

**We're On the Web!  
[www.gefree.org.nz](http://www.gefree.org.nz)**

Mailing Address Line 1  
Mailing Address Line 2  
Mailing Address Line 3  
Mailing Address Line 4  
Mailing Address Line 5

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