



# GE Free New Zealand

*In Food And Environment Inc.*

PO Box 13402, Wellington, NZ

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## Petition for the Regulation of Gene Edited Foods.

The Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Authority, a trans-Tasman body set up to assess genetically engineered food products for safety before allowing them into the food chains of Australia or New Zealand, is undergoing a review.

A petition written by Claire Bleakley, on behalf of GE-Free NZ, on The Regulation of Gene Edited Foods petition has garnered 1075 signatures. The petition requests that the Minister of Food Safety advocate for the regulation, safety testing, and full labeling of genetically modified (GM) or gene edited food in the current review of the FSANZ Act.

Bleakley recognizes that many New Zealand consumers are concerned about the approval process of genetically modified and gene edited (GM/GE) food, particularly the signalled GE deregulation and lack of safety trials for GM food. She asks that the review:

- regulate and label all GM and GE food;
- require 90 day feeding trials on GM food;
- ensures the public can challenge GM decisions;
- consults with stakeholders before ministerial forum approvals of GM decisions; and
- require full assessment of pesticide residues in GM food.

"Kia ora te whanau, this is amazing, in 20 days we have received over 1075 signatures to the petition" said Claire Bleakley "This shows the level of support for maintaining and strengthening the FSANZ Act regulation of GE foods."

Politicians conducting the FSANZ review have signaled that they are considering harmonization with Food Standards bodies overseas, namely Canada, raising many concerns over the possible alteration for labelling of GE foods. There is also concern over the signalled exemption of certain genetically engineered foods, recent research has detected that these foods have many off-target mutations and novel proteins that could cause serious health risks. The Food Standards authorities do not require any whole GE grain or plant to undergo prior safety testing. So, when a GE product enters the food chain, consumers are the guinea pigs and there is no idea who might be susceptible. There are no diagnostic tests to evaluate any harm. Many of these GE grains are engineered to be tolerant to a range of herbicides and insecticides; one corn variety is tolerant to 12 pesticides. There is no evaluation of the compound effects of pesticide residues, which are excluded as not part of the FSANZ assessment process.

"We ask the Minister of Food Safety, Hon Dr Ayesha Verrall, who is a member of the FSANZ Ministerial Forum, to ensure that our food chain is safe and that the promises made via legislation assure the public of an effective, transparent, and accountable regulatory framework that provides adequate labelled information" said Claire Bleakley. "Consumers need to have full confidence in the information and safety of all food, and full regulation of GE food must be upheld in the review".

### References

[https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/petitions/document/PET\\_102549/petition-of-claire-bleakley-regulation-of-gene-edited](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/petitions/document/PET_102549/petition-of-claire-bleakley-regulation-of-gene-edited)

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