



**For Immediate Release 4 December 2011**

**Commonwealth seeks to deny full GM labelling, against the 90%**

The Commonwealth has decided that most GM ingredients in food on our supermarket shelves should continue to remain unlabelled.

This is despite 85% of the 7000 submissions to the Food Labelling Review calling for full GM labelling, and repeated polls indicating more than 90% of respondents think GM food should be fully labelled.

The unlabelled GM ingredients are: GM canola, soy, corn and cottonseed oils; starches, sugars and other derivatives from GM crops and additives from GM bacteria and fungi. Milk, cheese, honey, eggs, meat and fish derived from animals fed GM feed will also remain unlabelled.

The Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council will be meeting in Melbourne on Friday to decide on the Commonwealth position.

The Commonwealth is also advocating that the minimal labelling be dropped at a mandatory sunset time, without setting any requirements for studies to have been conducted into the actual effects of GM food consumption.

The Commonwealth further rejected the recommendation that producers with GM contaminated products undergo a period of monitoring or testing to ensure the contamination was only accidental. Thus they allow producers to continually provide contaminated food and avoid GM labelling by describing it as "accidental". This has allowed Wyeth, the producers of S26 soy infant formula to repeatedly produce GM contaminated soy formula. [1]

MADGE spokesperson Fran Murrell said "The Commonwealth position tramples our human right to know what's in our food."

"Our political representatives appear more interested in appeasing multinational biotech corporations and the food industry than allowing us to know what we are eating."

"Corporations that profit from GM crops and food are refusing to be responsible to their consumers' demands for GM derived ingredients to be labelled. If GM is so great why are these companies not proudly labelling their GM food?"

"Consumers are right to want GM labelled when the government Food Standards body (FSANZ) does no testing of GM foods. Instead FSANZ relies on in-house tests by the multinational corporations wanting to profit from the GM food. MADGE has no confidence in the GM food approval process."

“Our Government and the food industry are happy for our infants to consume unlabelled GM in their first foods. This is in full knowledge that the safety of these foods in humans has never been tested. This is also despite canary-in-the-coal-mine food allergy extremes and declines in gastrointestinal health across the population since the introduction of GM foods.”

“It took decades to demonstrate the harm of asbestos and smoking. At least the sufferers actually knew they had smoked and knew they had been exposed to asbestos. We don’t even know what we are feeding our children, and we are denied the right to exercise choice to avoid GM.”

“If the State and NZ Ministers ratify this Commonwealth position we will be fully aware that they, like the Commonwealth, are content with not representing the views of their voting public.”

“In this case MADGE will be left with no recourse but to recommend to our members that they avoid processed products, unless the products are labelled GM free, and to work towards a new food system.”

“Most people don’t know what GM ingredients are in their food, nor do they know much about them. Without media attention/investigation pregnant mothers and parents of young children will continue to be kept in the dark.”

“We have to pass on this message one by one, and are really sorry for all the newly pregnant women and their children that we haven't had the opportunity to reach.”

The Australian Food and Grocery Council has acknowledged that almost all of the food on the supermarket shelves contains unlabelled GM ingredients.

MADGE has set up contact page to email the Ministerial Council for full GM food labelling.  
<http://www.madge.org.au/node/2699>

## **Contacts**

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[1] <http://www.madge.org.au/Docs/gm-in-infant-formula.pdf>

<http://www.madge.org.au/Docs/madge-release-2010-09-28.pdf>