



**Embargo: 27<sup>th</sup> October 2011, 6am**

## **"Whose Food Plan?"**

The National Food Plan is being outlined to the Rural Press this morning by the Federal Agriculture Minister, Mr Joe Ludwig.

MADGE is rallying to protest a "business-as-usual" plan for Big Food, calling for a plan that better serves the interests and needs of ordinary Australians.

Spokesperson Fran Murrell said "Local food producers are the mainstay of our agricultural systems. To achieve real food security, their viability must be protected.

"An unregulated market has brought hardship to farmers. It has also meant an increase in food imports."

"The big supermarkets control 60% of the food dollar. They can undercut prices and cause much economic hardship for primary producers."

The Australian agricultural industry is increasingly being dominated by multinational interests:

- Monsanto, owner of ~23% of world seed and 90% of GM seed, has bought 19.9% of WA's ex-public wheat and barley breeding firm InterGrain that supplies 40% of Australia's wheat seed. Monsanto have announced their intention to develop GM wheat.
- Cargill, the world's largest trader of farm commodities, has bought the Australian Wheat Board's commodity business and is expected to become Australia's largest wheat exporter. Cargill is being accused by Argentina of large scale tax evasion. In July 2011 a company part owned by Cargill bought up all the available wheat feed in the UK.
- Australia's State Governments, universities and research organisations like CSIRO have partnerships or links with companies such as Monsanto, Dow Agrosiences and Bayer.

A National Food Plan needs to have public health, farmer sustainability and the ability of Australia to feed itself as its basis.

The Food Plan has consulted with organisations like the National Farmers Federation (NFF) and the Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC), CSIRO, and Woolworths. The NFF and AFGC promote big agribusiness, including the interests of Monsanto which is an associate member of the AFGC. Community groups were excluded.

MADGE will urge Minister Joe Ludwig to use the National Food Plan to foster the development of the burgeoning local, healthy, sustainable and resilient food system.

Where: CQ Functions, 113 Queen St, (between Bourke and Little Collins Streets), Melbourne  
When: Thursday 27 Oct 2011 from 7:15 am to 8.45am

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