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MADGE: We won't embrace GM foods Guilt Campaign

MADGE Australia is asking if Agriculture Minister Tony Burke is running a guilt campaign to silence Australian concerns about eating GM foods. He made the October 16 World Food Day statement

"I don't see how anyone can mount a moral argument against genetically modified food when we're facing these sorts of projections on global hunger"¹

"Is this statement inferring that if we say why we feel unsure about the safety of GM food for our babies and children, we become responsible for world hunger?", asked Madeleine Love of the MADGE network. "What can he be meaning?"

"Is Minister Burke putting forward the idea that global hunger could be solved by GM food? Is he inferring that GM crops are higher yielding and could thus feed more people? Does he know that there aren't any high yielding GM crops? GM canola yielded 17% less than its non-GM counterpart in Victorian trials last year, and the Union of Concerned Scientists released the report 'Failure to Yield' in respect of global GM crops last April."

http://www.ucsusa.org/food_and_agriculture/science_and_impacts/science/failure-to-yeild.html

"Is Minister Burke's statement saying that world hunger could be fixed by the dream of an increase in food production through GM agriculture, rather than by addressing complex political, resource and wealth disparity issues? The 2009 World Food Prize Laureate, Ethiopian Gebisa Ejeta said on October 16 World Food Day "Africa is not hungry because of lack of biotechnology" <http://bit.ly/2VKowc>

"These serious disparity issues exist within countries, as well as between them. There are hungry people in Australia <http://www.streetsmartaaustralia.org/>, and millions of hungry people in the USA <http://tinyurl.com/yhpq3yv>, yet we grow in obesity and it is said that there is enough food wasted in the West to feed the hungry world."

"A Brazilian city made food a human right and everyone benefited." <http://tinyurl.com/yqgb6ac>

"We often hear that we need the GM industry or we'll starve. In fact the biggest report ever done on how to feed the world was signed off last year (IAASTD - 60 countries signed off, 400 scientists, 3 years, sponsored by 5 UN agencies and the World Bank). It advocated diverse agro-ecological farming which is already being practiced by small scale producers. It said local farmers worldwide could feed us all. They need research and support but not GM crops."

"Maybe Minister Burke is saying that if we put forward solid arguments against GM food, potential GM crop development will be stifled. MADGE understands that at this time the techniques for developing GM crops are still crude, random and destructive to the host genome - and that we have no practical way of determining the full effects because we don't know enough about the genome."

"If the food can't be determined to be safe, what is the value of it at this time? Putting GM crops back in the labs will not mean the world will go hungry. Simple investment in sustainable agriculture research may speed the development of more nutritious and resilient crops, more quickly, and political will would assist with distribution."

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http://www.maff.gov.au/media/media_releases/2009/october/australias_role_in_feeding_the_world_a_focus_on_world_food_day