



**SUPER
MARKET** **STOPPING GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD**
ACTIVIST
KIT
GREENPEACE

A GE-FREE FUTURE STARTS IN YOUR TROLLEY!

Supermarket Activist Kit

Introduction to the Supermarket Activist Kit

In the following pages you will find sample campaign materials and tips for supermarket campaigning. We hope this kit is a good start to an amazing campaign. Please feel free to use, copy and distribute it as you'd like. You can also use the text of the flyer and petition and plug in your supermarket campaign and group information. This kit is by no means comprehensive, and we encourage you to check out the resources page - there is a lot of great information out there.

Good Luck!

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Section I: Introduction and Tips

Why supermarket activism is Important

Supermarket activism was extremely important and effective in forcing genetically engineered (GE) food off the shelves throughout Europe and now even in the US. In Australia, we are hoping to see some of those same results. Big companies like Unilever and Arnotts-Campbells have already declared that they are not using genetically engineered ingredients anywhere in the food chain, including animal feed.

Coles has removed GE ingredients from some of its own brand products, but has not given any commitment to remove GE from the entire food chain (including animal feed) used in their own brand products. Other supermarkets, like Woolworths have not yet made any commitment to remove GE from the food chain of their own products at all. Own brand products include the supermarket's own labels as well as foods produced on-site, like delicatessen, fresh meats and baked goods.

Now we have the opportunity and the obligation to demand safe, healthy, non-GE foods from *all* of our supermarkets across the country. Supermarket victories all over the world, prove that as major food retailers, they *can* make this change. Perhaps more importantly, these victories shows that, working together, *we can make this change happen!*

This supermarket kit should inspire and empower you to demand GE-free food, to fight for safe and sustainable food production, and reclaim the aisles for our children and grandchildren!

Why supermarket campaigns are effective

- Supermarkets watch their bottom line and the movement of their sales very closely. Again, this is a highly competitive industry with narrow profit margins – every dent will be felt;
- Supermarkets protect their brand – they can not afford to lose trust. If their store brands are thought of as lower in quality, so too will their store be;
- Supermarket managers pride themselves on responding to the needs of their immediate community of customers. Most store managers also receive bonuses based on their store sales;
- Supermarkets strive to be seen as the consumers' friend and aspire to building relationships with their customers (hence loyalty cards, special points, store coupons on receipts, etc);
- Supermarkets watch their competitors closely. If one moves on an issue and does well, they will follow suit.

Regard supermarket campaigning as market intervention and public engagement, not just a protest. You want to build power, rather than solely expressing your lack of power. Supermarkets are strategically important for market intervention because:

- Supermarkets control a large amount of food production through their own brand products. In Australia supermarkets own brand products typically account for 11-15% of supermarket sales. Own brand products are also the supermarkets' way of gaining customer loyalty;
- Supermarkets are the part of the food industry that has the most exposure and immediate accountability to the public. They also have the least to gain from GE foods;
- Supermarkets must answer to their customers and the public, and they must maintain a good public profile and trust. The supermarket industry is highly competitive and the profit margins are relatively slim, so any threat of losing customers, sales or image is a serious one.

Supermarkets are great places to engage people

- You are at the magical “point of sale”. Food companies and advertisers pay a lot of money to be where you are – use it wisely;
- Supermarkets are public, high-volume, mainstream and accessible;
- People in supermarkets are already thinking about food and making decisions about their purchases - so what you say has immediate relevance;
- Most people do the majority of their shopping on the weekends when they have a little more time. This allows you the time to talk with them about GE food.

Your goal at the supermarket is to engage customers, wake them up as active consumers and give them the information, tools and inspiration necessary to make their consumer dollars count toward something they believe in.

The golden rule of supermarket campaigning is focus on the customer

- The public is our strongest ally. They have nothing to gain and everything to lose from GE food;
- In the end, they spend the money and they call the shots. Keep reminding them and the supermarket that “the customer is always right”;
- Supermarkets don’t just depend on a customer’s money, they also depend on their loyalty and their trust - this is a powerful currency;
- At some point the supermarket is going to have to decide whether they support the consumer or the biotech industry. If this conflict is made public they will be forced to side with the consumer (who keeps them in business);
- People are the ones to target as they have a conscience. Corporations have other priorities.

In practice this means

- Put 80 – 90% of your time into winning public support and action, and only 10% into trying to directly influence the company yourself;
- Build up a relationship, these are your peers. This is exactly what the supermarket tries to do;
- Take notice of how the supermarket tries to attract their customers – specials, loyalty club cards, where / how they advertise, whose brands they mimic in their packaging. All of this may help you to understand their customers’ shopping habits a little better;
- Offer services, information and help to the customer – leaflets, advice on how to contact the supermarket, petitions to sign, shopping lists, a supermarket tour, check their purchases for GE ingredients, alternative places to shop for GE-free foods, etc.

What supermarkets have said about GE food

1. “It is perfectly safe and we are following the law”, or “it’s not our problem, talk to the government authority who approves the food, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)”
Your response: There is NO evidence that GE foods are safe, but there are warning signs that they may be dangerous. Many supermarkets have already taken steps to eliminate GE ingredients from their store brand products. These companies took the lead and responded to the needs of their customers when government regulations failed to do so.
2. “We realise some of our customers have concerns, but we can not change the food system. To those who prefer non-GE food choices, we are committed to offering organic products which do not allow the use of GE”.
Your Response: It is possible to source non-GE foods. Supermarkets in the US and Europe are already sourcing non-GE products. Because of the threats posed to organic farming from GE contamination, it is clear that GE agriculture and organic agriculture cannot co-exist. If you are truly committed to offering organics to your customers, you must phase out the use of GE ingredients.

3. “Your concerns are our concerns, we are surveying our suppliers to assess the level of GE products in our store brand line and will make that information available to our customers as soon as it is feasible to do so”.

Your Response: What is your timeline for responses from your suppliers? How will you make this information public – label products containing GE ingredients, list GE products, etc? Will you tell your suppliers that you will be searching for non-GE sources for your product line? (Basically, put them on the spot and get some commitment out of them).

And now the fun part... a selection of tactics and activities used in supermarket campaigns. Use them, adapt them, let them inspire you to think up yet more creative tactics. It is common to start out with letter writing and phone calls and escalate your tactics as the campaign progresses according to the level of response you get from the company.

Tactics to begin the campaign

- Write letters to the supermarket’s CEO, call him or her, fax the headquarters, email their customer service department;
- Place information tables outside with leaflets and petitions. Hand out True Food Guides;
- Give a supermarket tour – take customers and employees through the aisles and point out all the products with GE ingredients. Be sure to point out what those typical ingredients are;
- Go “carolling” in the supermarket with familiar songs that you’ve made new words for about GE food. Maybe the store’s jingle can be adapted;
- Filling up the customer comment boxes in the store with the demand that they remove all GE ingredients from their store brands;
- Offer to check customers bags for GE products on their way out, remind them they can return anything for any reason at most supermarkets;
- Provide customers with a map of the nearest store they can buy organic and GE-free foods, offer them information on the local Farmer’s Market;
- Collect and sign store receipts and send them to the manager or CEO with a message such as “I’m worth this amount of shopping dollars (circle the amount spent – choose a high one!) and I demand GE-free food.”
- Hold a meeting of your group or community members with the local store management – the store managers have more direct power over the company than you do, use their power as much as possible to influence those higher up.

Tactics for later in the campaign

- Print up and hand out “dis-loyalty” cards;
- Hold a demonstration where people cut up and return their loyalty cards;
- Quarantine a shopping cart full of GE food by wrapping caution or biohazard tape around it, or placing big signs in the cart;
- Perform some supermarket theatre – mad scientists, mutant vegetables, blind-folded shoppers “being left in the dark”;
- Send a video petition filmed outside the supermarket to the store manager and CEO;
- Create customer questionnaires and send those filled out to the manager or CEO, or a major shareholder;
- Do you know anyone who holds stock in the company? Get them to organise other stockholders to bring up the issue at the next shareholders meeting. Or better yet – get them all to drop the stock and make it very clear why;
- Many supermarkets sponsor local events. Depending on the nature of these events, make your presence and your disappointment in the company known. Make sure you have materials on-hand;
- Be careful not to damage any of the store’s products.

There are lots of creative ways to engage the public – be creative. Keep the supermarket surprised – set the agenda. Be entertaining, be inspiring, be informative and have fun!

Section II: Planning action in your community

Whether you're hosting a small meeting or organising regular visits targeting a local store, you can get involved in your area in the national supermarket campaign. This section will give you an introduction into:

- Planning your campaign
- Recruiting volunteers and members into your group
- Organising a group meeting

Again, please check the resources section for further information on these topics.

Campaign Planning

If there is an existing supermarket campaign that your group can be a part of, rather than starting something new, it is preferable to join with another campaign if you share similar goals. There is power in numbers and working together, and starting your own campaign when there is already one in place may split those numbers by forming two separate groups focused on two different targets. Even if your message is the same, our power lies in sheer numbers of people coordinating on one target. Contact Greenpeace to find out about existing GE activist communities and Greenpeace local groups – or sign on to the True Food Network.

If there is no current campaign or local group in your area, start your own. You've obviously already chosen your issue and decided to focus on supermarket activism as a means of forcing change. Now you need to choose a supermarket target.

Choosing A Target

So, you want to work on a supermarket campaign, but there are five supermarkets in your community – how do you choose which chain to focus on?

1. Company communications.

To narrow the list of potential supermarket targets, start by communicating with all the chains to help narrow the list. Write them all a letter and ask them what their policy is on GE ingredients, include in the letter a short description of why you are concerned about GE food and ask them how they plan to address your concerns. Chances are, if they are mainstream supermarkets, you will get similar answers, though they will probably vary slightly in tone.

2. Research

The supermarket you focus on should have their own brand products, sell some organic and be publicly active in the community. You want them to have their own brand products because this is where they have control of what kind of ingredients are used (eg non-GE corn syrup, etc.) If they offer organic foods, this is a signal that they are somewhat in tune with consumer preferences for healthy food. And finally, if they are active in the community, they probably care about their image and are vulnerable to public pressure.

To find out this and other information, you will have to do some research on the companies. You can find out a lot about the company from their web site, especially if they have a section for shareholders or potential investors. There are also some good websites for doing corporate research. Check the Resources Section for more ideas. Here's a list of questions to help narrow the selection of your target:

1. Do they have their own store brand products?
2. What is their policy on GE ingredients?
3. Do they sell organic foods, if so, are any of these their own brands?
4. Are they members of your community, sponsor local events, etc?
5. Are they affiliated with stores that are being targeted by other groups?
6. Do they have a double-standard- eg are they owned by a company that is GE-free elsewhere, but not in Australia?
7. Have they been responsive to consumer pressure on other issues?

By narrowing them down like this you will come out with a target that fits your criteria best and one that you end up knowing a lot about. If this still leaves you with a few, go to some simpler questions. What name do you think will rally the most support? Which chain has the easiest locations to get to?

Planning your campaign

Now that you have a target, you need to figure out how to build pressure to change them. In planning how to get the change you want from your target, you need a strategy on how to build enough power and momentum in your community to be able to force a desired change. You then need to decide which tactics are going to move your campaign into victory.

The Strategy Chart in the Appendix is an example of one way to move through the planning process. It is a great tool for campaign planning and moves you through the process with good questions. As you begin to plug things into one column, things will begin to change in the others. It's an excellent way to see the relationship between your goals and your actions. Following this chart is an example of a chart filled out with a fictional campaign, and a blank chart you can use in your own planning.

Recruiting volunteers and members

"If you want to move people, it has to be toward a vision that's positive for them, that taps important values, that gets them something they desire, and it has to be presented in a compelling way that they feel inspired to follow." Martin Luther King, Jr

Recruitment is possibly the most important and overlooked part of organising. People want to feel involved in something by nature, so you are missing a great opportunity to develop your group, and new leaders within your group, if you overlook recruiting volunteers and members. People join groups for several reasons, and usually, all you have to do is ask them to join. If you have shared values and vision, a strong campaign, and something they relate to in their community, you are sure to get volunteers. When you talk to people about joining your group, always appeal to why this issue might matter to them. Are they a parent? A teacher? A health care worker? What is it you can find out about them that would make this issue important to them? Recruiting, like so many other aspects of organising, comes down to relationships. Don't spend so much time telling them why they should care about your issue, instead, spend that time finding out why it matters to them.

People join groups for a number of reasons:

- if what that group is working on affects their community directly,
- for companionship in a like-minded community,
- for fun
- to develop new skills or find a job in the non-profit community
- their morals, ethics, values and vision

Some tips on how to recruit

Outreach should be built into every aspect of your campaign. Your group should be doing activities that regularly raise the recognition of the group as well as giving people the opportunity to join. This is easily accomplished at tabling and petitioning events. Your group can also plan a teach-in on the issue or a larger public event just to get a bigger crowd and see who is interested in joining. You can also do this at related events planned by other groups – many will let you have a table with information at their event. You should ask every person if they want to volunteer. You should have simple things for them to do to get involved. Usually, if one person out of ten that you've asked shows up to volunteer, you are doing well.

- **Recruit to an activity or an event – not another meeting:** You want people involved who are active and want to be active – not chronic meeting-goers. If all the group offers new people is meetings, chances are you will lose them. There is nothing wrong with occasional meetings to bring everyone together and talk about how the campaign is going, but don't rely on these meetings as the bulk of your activities. Recruit people to run a table on weekends, start a petition drive in their community, speak at their children's P&C meeting, or make a presentation at their local church.
- **Delegate responsibilities:** No one person in the group should be responsible for recruiting and coordinating volunteers. One idea is to have new members or volunteers run the tables or petitioning activities they themselves were recruited at. They are familiar with the activity and know it can be done. They will know what is expected of them, and will be able to explain this activity well to those they recruit. This in turn develops a sense of involvement and leadership as they recruit new members who go through the same program they have gone through. As you get more and more volunteers, some of the more experienced can run phone trees to keep the other volunteers involved and on track.
- **Be inspired and inspiring:** If you are motivated and inspired by the group and campaign, you will be motivating or inspiring to others.
- **Listen to people:** The best leaders are ones that spend more time listening and asking questions as opposed to talking at people. Good recruiting is based on conversation – not a monologue of how wonderful the work you're doing is. You need to be able to draw people out. What are their interests, why do they care about this issue, where did they go to school – anything to establish a personal background and rapport. You have to really want to know these things and ask good questions. Listening is more than just not talking. Listening is active.
- **Get a commitment and follow it up:** Have people to commit to doing certain activities on specified days. Avoid people walking away thinking, "Yes, I should really do that some day", as they probably won't. Let them know you will follow-up with them between now and the scheduled time (tell them what day you will call, who will call and be clear on what will happen next). Then call them when you said you would call. Follow up is very important. This lets the new volunteer know the group is organized, does what it says it's going to do, and that people really do want their involvement. When they show up at whatever event you've planned for them, introduce them around to the rest of the group, check in on them, keep them involved in conversations. In short – make them feel welcome and needed by the group.

- **Develop leaders from volunteers.** It's not enough to just recruit people – you have to keep them. To develop leaders, get to know people's strengths and weaknesses. What do they enjoy doing? Then think through what the group needs (maybe more people with media skills, event coordinators, writers, etc). Come up with a plan on how to develop new people to the next level (eg from petitioning to petitioning coordinator, from attending the news conference to learning how to write the news release). Developing leaders takes time and training. Many volunteer groups are short on both. But taking the time to think about how to develop volunteers will save you time later. If the group doesn't have the time to do training, call around to local groups that might be willing to offer a training. Check out the resources section for organisations.

Recruiting and maintaining new members in your group is not only essential, but fun and exciting.

Organising a meeting

Hosting a meeting of like-minded people could be your first step in your community outreach. Your action will be more effective with even a small group working together. Reach out to friends, neighbours, classmates, anyone who you think would be interested in learning more and getting active. Look for allies at natural food stores, restaurants, local nature centres, farmers' markets, alternative health centres---anywhere people are concerned about food, health or the environment.

Publicise the meeting with flyers, announcements in event calendars and emails. Written announcements should be followed up with phone calls to remind people of the meeting.

Plan the meeting - have clear goals, an agenda with time schedule for each agenda item. Have a facilitator to keep the group focused on the agenda and to encourage participation. Have a timekeeper to keep the meeting on schedule. Have a note taker to keep minutes.

Start and stop the meeting on time. If meetings perpetually start late, people will stop showing up on time or at all. Time is precious these days, so start and stop on time.

Have a sign-in sheet to collect contact information from everyone. Make it available so people can stay in touch.

Break the ice - plan a fun, relaxing start to the meeting. Begin the meeting with introductions, have everyone say something about themselves or why they are interested in the issue.

The facilitator should check with the group on "common understandings" for meeting process. For example, decide if people should raise hands or if they can just jump in to talk.

The agenda. After introductions and common understandings, you'll get to the "business" of the meeting. "Brainstorming" can be a useful tool: This means exploring ideas from everyone in the group, without allowing any discussion or judgement of whether the ideas are possible or worthwhile. Keep brainstorms to a set time, but allow flexibility if lots of ideas are coming out. Then take time to choose ideas that the group wants to pursue, and prioritise these. There may be sub-groups, some people

may want to pursue one approach while others prefer another. It's also a good idea to have some action people can take at the meeting – for example, write a letter to the store manager of your targeted store, write a letter to the editor. This makes people feel part of an active community.

Get commitments

By the end of the meeting have an action plan with clear agreement from people who agree to take on certain tasks and a clear time for reporting on progress.

Suggested goals for a meeting

Any one or more of these would be a good start to your organising:

- Plan a meeting with managers from a local supermarket.
- Plan educational events in the community; link with schools, fairs, other community organisations.
- Organise outreach to local media: set up groups to write letters to the editor and make calls to talk radio stations.
- Plan a Supermarket Tour
- Plan a tabling or petitioning event

Be sure to **follow up** with all the people who attended your meeting. Call them and thank them for coming, send out reminders for any action people agreed to take, remind people about any upcoming events your group planned and keep them involved. It is also a good idea to call the people you invited who didn't attend. Let them know what happened at the meeting and invite them to the next activity. This will help them begin to feel involved in the group.

On the following pages are tips for:

- Tabling and petitioning
- Meeting with your local store manager, elected officials or potential allies
- Give a "Supermarket Tour"

Plan a stall

Setting up a table with the group's information is a great way to accomplish campaign goals and engage the public. At the stall you can get petitions signed, letters written and volunteers signed up. Here are some tips to great tabling:)

- If you don't have an easily transportable table, an ironing board works great. Be sure to have a sign-up sheet for those interested in volunteering or coming to the next meeting or event. A good activity at a table is having people write letters to the company you're targeting. Have a short sample letter on hand and paper for people to write their letter. Keeping these letters and mailing them for people ensures that they actually get sent – never assume because someone has taken the time to write a letter at your table that they will actually remember to mail it, this is rarely the case. Once people see how easy it is to "work" a table, they will be more inclined to volunteer a few hours to do one themselves. After all – they wrote a letter!
- Petitions are also an easy way to get people interested in your campaign and make their voices heard. A sample petition is included in this kit. You can use it as is or cut and paste in the name of your target and your group contact information as you see fit. It's best to have a short description of the problem, the target of your campaign, and the demand against that target. You want to make it as easy for people as possible. Petitions are also an important tool to use in your

campaign because they reflect the opinions of their customers, especially if you collect signatures in front of your target store. These can then be saved until you get the number of signatures you've set out in your campaign goals, or sent to the store manager or CEO as they come in at strategic moments in the campaign. You should set some number goals for how many signatures you want to have before you send them in, and work out how many hours a week your group will need to spend collecting signatures to reach that goal.

Both of these activities can be planned to coincide with the times most people shop. According to the national average, people typically do most of their grocery shopping on Thursday evenings and weekend afternoons.

Checklist

- If you plan to set up the table in front of a store, ask the manager first for permission. You maybe told you can not be on their property, however in many cases there is a public sidewalk or shopping center thoroughfare where you can legally set up your table. If you are unsure, check with your local council to find out what your rights are in that particular space and whether or not you need a permit. If you are asked to leave and are unsure of your rights, you should leave (check the Resources section for more information on getting to know your rights).
- Try to have at least 2 people to run the table. This makes it more fun than standing there by yourself. It is also easier to engage people if you have one person standing behind the table and one nearby with a clipboard of petitions and flyers.
- Set up your table in a spot where you will not block the flow of customer traffic – be it foot traffic or automobile.
- Make sure you have materials:
 1. Flyers
 2. Petitions, postcards, sample letters – whichever you choose
 3. Volunteer sign-up sheets
 4. A sign or banner with the name of your group
 5. Pens...lots of pens
 6. Clipboards to help anyone walking around with petitions have an easier time, as well as keeping anything on the table from blowing away
 7. A donation can

Again – follow up is key. Call anyone who signed up to volunteer quickly and get them involved in the next event. As you get more volunteers, you may want to set up a phone-tree to remind everyone to come out as scheduled and include more people in the recruitment process.

Planning a meeting with store management, elected officials or potential allies

Once you have decided to meet with store management, potential allies, or elected officials, you should plan your meeting. Go into the meeting with a specific request in mind:

- Ask supermarkets to assure you that their own brands products are made without GE ingredients. Ask them to request policies from their suppliers ensuring they will source only non-GE derived ingredients for the products they make for the supermarket.
- Ask elected officials to support a specific bill, regulation, or policy. Ask them to put pressure on the Food Standards Authority (FSANZ) and the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR).

- Ask allies to help spread the word, to display literature, print an article on your campaign in their group newsletter, host a meeting in their community or help plan and attend your group's events.

Each member of your group should have something to say in the meeting. Keep it brief, but give each person a chance to speak. Bring background material: assume the person you are meeting with knows nothing about the issue. Bring fact sheets and articles that make your main points. Be polite. A meeting is the start of a relationship. The person you meet with may not agree or do what you want. Your follow-up (whether it's organising a demonstration or another meeting with more people) is just as important and can lead to further communication down the road. If you are asked a question you can't answer, be honest. Offer to get back to the person at a later date. Phone the people you met with a week or so after the meeting, to see if there is any progress on commitments they made. Keep your group informed of any developments, and be ready to act if agreements are not upheld.

How to conduct a supermarket tour

Supermarket tours can be done wherever you live to raise the consciousness of markets and consumers alike. Tours are not a demonstration or protest but a way to engage shoppers and store personnel in learning about Genetically Engineered (GE) ingredients in our food and GE crops in our environment. The goal of the tour is to increase awareness of GE foods and begin a process of engagement with the targeted store. You and/or your group can help empower others to raise consumer concerns about GE foods in your area stores.

Supermarket tours - step by step

Advance Planning

Choose a major chain, preferably one that sells its own store-brand products (for example, Homebrand is the store brand of Safeways and Woolworths, Farmland is Coles' own brand). If it's not your neighbourhood store, visit the target market often enough to give you a good feel for its layout, inside and out.

Advertise the supermarket tour, widely and well in advance. Invite local church and civic leaders, politicians, chefs and restaurant owners, teachers and students, vegetarian groups, senior citizen groups, environmental groups, gardeners and farmers, especially organic food producers and food co-op organisers.

Contact the supermarket manager, a few days before you plan to conduct the tour. Explain what you intend to do, and why. Invite store personnel to take part in the tour. You should be prepared for the store management not to allow your tour. In that case, you can proceed with your plans, but be ready if store management confronts you. Be clear that you and your group are shoppers and want to discuss issues while you shop; reassure the store management that you will not block aisles, speak loudly, or otherwise impair other shoppers. If they still refuse you, set-up your information table outside and ask your group to pass out flyers and gather signatures on petitions.

Contact your local council beforehand to find out where you can stall on public ground near the store (usually sidewalks along storefronts are public ground, check to see if you need a permit). You should also ask how to contact the store's regional or national management to complain about being barred from that store.

Plan your route through the store and prepare your script. (You'll find a

sample script and FAQs in the appendix).

The Tour Day

Outside the supermarket

- Set up your information table outside the market (as close to the market entrance as possible, you may have to investigate your legal rights to public space, as noted above).
- Have your table stocked with printed handouts (make copies of Greenpeace fact sheets and other information, or request copies from us) and a clipboard for collecting signatures on petitions and the names and addresses of participants and interested passers-by.
- Have a friendly, courteous volunteer or two ready to talk about GE foods.
- At tour time, assemble your participants. Introduce yourself. Thank them for coming and brief them on what to expect inside the store. Encourage tour members to ask questions, of you and of store personnel. Make sure everyone has copies of fact sheets and other material. The tour leader should carry additional leaflets to give people who join the tour or seem interested.

Inside the Supermarket

- Ideally you should have two people to conduct a tour: the tour guide and a traffic manager. The guide leads the tour and speaks at each station. The traffic manager follows the group, keeping it together, and invites other shoppers to join the tour.
- Speak confidently and clearly. Be friendly and determined. This is easiest if you're well prepared, script in hand.
- Point out the 1800 numbers on product packaging. Urge tour members to call these numbers frequently, asking questions and expressing opinions about genetically engineered ingredients.
- If you know company policies, be ready to point out which brands use or avoid GMOs, without overly praising or blaming specific companies. If you don't know a company's policy or if other tough questions come up, urge tour members to ask the store manager and/or call the company's 1800 number.

The Tour

Outside the Store

- Assemble at the information table. Explain the tour: an introduction to GE food and farming compared to sustainable alternatives.
 - It is not a protest but an educational opportunity and a chance to engage store management in the start of a continuing dialogue on the kind of food you want to see in the store.
 - Again, check the Appendix for a sample script.
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Section III: Working with the media

Using the media is a great way to apply pressure to the target of your campaign as well as build name recognition and strength for your group. Planning strategic moments in your campaign timeline for a media event is always a good idea. When to call the press is largely dependent on your campaign goals, but there are some frequently used media tactics:

- Use the media when you announce your campaign or program. This is news if you plan a good event for them;
- You may want to use them at key times such as local elections or regulatory comment periods. Or a time when you can link your campaign to current local news;
- To release a report or new information about the campaign or the campaign target;
- Call them when you have a big event – such as a large public rally, community meeting, or “action”.

Keep in mind that it seldom works to call the media solely to talk about your campaign. You have to have an event to bring them out. Remember that reporters are concerned about getting a good story that their readers can relate to, and something that sells the paper. Even print reporters are relying more and more on the visual aspects of an event, so be sure you have something good for them to see – even if they don't run a photo they will often describe the scene in their story. Think about what you want the “picture” to look like in advance. What message are you conveying? Is the name of your group in a prominent place? Even if you don't plan on it, you may attract the press by your action against genetic engineering. So be prepared!

Who to contact

It pays to do some research into local media before your event. Keep track of who writes the consumer stories, the environmental stories, progressive business stories. Study what each reporter's or newspaper's writing style is like. When you have an event, call the assignment desk and see who the best person is to cover your particular story. After a while, you will learn who is best to contact for which stories or angles on your campaign. In this way you will begin to compile a good media list to keep on hand for events. As you gain more experience through working with your local media, you may want to set up a database of your media list to make faxing and emailing easier. You can also put any personal notes in the database that may help you identify this person later. Ask other groups eg big NGOs or a political party for their media list of the area.

Working with the media, like many other things in organising, often comes down to relationships. When you find someone who covered your event, follow-up with that person. Don't harass them, but you want to build up a rapport with reporters to keep them interested in your campaign. It is also helpful to occasionally send friendly reporters news clips or press releases on issues related to your campaign – don't overwhelm them, but give them the background they need to write a well-thought story. This may also lead them to call you when the issue comes up again. They will begin to see you as an expert and come to you with questions.

The media advisory

If you want to invite the press to cover your local event, you will need to let reporters know ahead of time. You need to write a media advisory. This alerts reporters (in

particular TV and radio who may wish to attend) to the basics, the "who, where, and when" of your event. The media advisory should go to reporters a few days before the event. You should fax or email it, then call to make sure reporters received it and to get an idea if they are planning to attend.

Media advisory tips

- The advisory is intended as a notice to the media that your event is upcoming. It is meant to entice the media without giving away the whole story.
 - The headline and first lines of the advisory are critical. Busy reporters will only read the headline and maybe the first sentence of the advisory in deciding if they are going to cover the event.
 - If you are going to engage in direct action, it may not be appropriate to do a news advisory because the media will undoubtedly contact the supermarket. This is a judgement call. You may want to focus on a public demonstration or other event to get them interested without giving away specific details.
 - News advisories should be short – no more than a page of large font details.
 - Advisories should be sent out 1-2 days before the event.
 - Never assume the media has seen your advisories after you've faxed them. Call to follow up.
 - Press calls should be made the day the advisories are sent out and again the day of the event.
 - If a print reporter commits to attending the event, unless you have new information, don't call them again. This is a judgement call, but you do not want to ruin relationships with the media by calling too much.
-

MEDIA ADVISORY

LOCAL GROUPS RALLY AGAINST GE FOODS

WHAT: A coalition of women's groups and parent organisations, joined by Tamworth Resistance Against GE, will demonstrate in front of Woolworths supermarket, the food retailer. The coalition is calling on the company to end its use of genetically engineered ingredients in its store brand products.

WHEN: Wednesday, May 15th @11:00 AM

WHERE: Outside Woolworths supermarket
55 Main Street (cross street Jones), Tamworth NSW

WHO: Women for Safe Food, Mothers for Labelling, Tamworth Parent Club and Tamworth Resistance Against GE

WHY: Because Tamworth residents are eating GE food against their will.

VISUALS: Local women and children dumping supermarket products into a biohazard garbage can.

CONTACTS:

Jane Smith of Tamworth Resistance Against GE: tel 02 95551212

Dan Smith of Tamworth Parent Club: tel 02 9555 1311

The media release

On the day of the event, send the aforementioned media a media release. This should include the information in your advisory (time, place etc), but go into more detail and explanation about how the event will proceed and why you are doing it. It should include some explanation of the issue and the background of your event, preferably with quotes that can be used in an article.

Media release tips

- The press release should read like a newspaper article with quotes from your spokespeople;
 - Just as with the advisory, the headline and first lines of the release are critical. Busy reporters will only read the headline and maybe the first sentence;
 - Keep to no more than one main message with two subordinate messages in the news release. What do you think is the main message of the news release below?;
 - A news release should never be longer than a page;
 - Have copies of the release along with other relevant materials (eg factsheets) with you at the event as part of your press kit to be given to reporters;
 - For the media that does not go to the event: After the event fax them the news release and call to pitch the story;
 - Below is a sample release from a fictitious event. Feel free to use this as a guide for your own release.
-

[SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE]

MEDIA RELEASE

LOCALS DUMP GENETICALLY ENGINEERED (GE) FOOD ON SUPERMARKET DOOR

Tamworth, Tuesday May 15th 2002: A coalition of women's groups and parent organisations, joined by Tamworth Resistance Against GE, today dumped Woolworths' store brand products in a garbage can marked with biohazard tape. The coalition of groups is calling on the food retailer to end its use of genetically engineered ingredients in its store brand products.

"We don't want to eat genetic experiments," said Sally Smith of the Tamworth Parent Club. "We want Woolworths to protect our health and environment by removing genetically engineered ingredients from their store brand products."

The coalition also presented the local manager with 1,000 petition signatures collected from Tamworth Woolworths customers. A letter from the coalition accompanied the petitions. The coalition includes Tamworth Parent Club, etc. The Tamworth coalition is part of a national coalition of community groups calling on the retailer to change its practices.

"Woolworths tells its customers they provide safe, healthy food", said John Jones of Tamworth Community Group. "But there is nothing safe or healthy about genetically engineered food. It's untested and therefore risky".

The coalition of groups says that genetic engineering poses risks to the environment and public health. Unlike traditional crop breeding, genetic engineering enables scientists to cross genes from bacteria, viruses and animals into plants. Risks include the creation of new food allergies, environmental superweeds and increased herbicide use in agricultural practices. Additionally, the gene-altered soy found in the Woolworths product contains an antibiotic resistant marker gene which science and medical organisations, including the British Medical Association, warn could make render common antibiotics useless.

"Woolworths customers have clearly spoken," said Smith. "In signing this petition, regular Woolworths customers said they were shocked to hear that the company uses genetically engineered ingredients. People just don't want to eat GE foods".

CONTACT:

Jane Smith of Tamworth Resistance Against GE: tel 02 9555 1212

John Jones of Tamworth Parent Club: tel 02 9555 1311

Interviews

If you get reporters to come to your event, they will want to hear your story. You should have a media spokesperson or two from your group chosen before the event. Everyone attending your event should know who these spokespeople are and be able to point them out to the reporters. Everyone should have one or two lines (soundbites) that you go over in advance so everyone knows the message that you want to get across to the press. This is important because the press will likely want to talk to as many people as they can who attend. Spokespeople should be prepared ahead of time with short, clear answers to common questions. For television or radio in particular, short "soundbites" are likely to be all the reporter can use, so keep each point to 10-15 seconds. Some reporters will let you talk for a long time then just use one 5 second segment, so be careful what you say: be prepared with your arguments and stick to them! For example, if a reporter says, "Isn't it true that there's no evidence that GE food hasn't harmed anyone," you might say, "GE food hasn't harmed anyone but we don't know what the long-term threat is." The next day you might be quoted like this: "Jim Green of TRAGE agreed that 'GE foods haven't harmed anyone.' So, a better answer is, "There is no evidence that GE foods are safe in the long run, yet they are not labelled so we can't avoid eating them."

Use positive language as much as possible. Don't just say, "We oppose GE food," but use a positive approach: "We support the consumer's right to know what's in our food and to choose food made without GE ingredients." If a question comes up that you can't answer, it's okay to tell the reporter you don't know. You can always look into the matter and get back to them. This is always preferable to making something up which could come back to haunt you.

Media follow-up

Be sure to collect contact information from any reporters who attend your event or who interview you by phone. You may want to have an assigned role of media sign-in person at your event to ensure that all reporters and camera people who show up are greeted, given a press kit and signed in on a media contact sheet.

The success of media coverage usually comes down to how well your campaign conveys a problem faced by many people in the community, so that people become engaged as participants in the debate on that problem. It has been said many times that "Any press is good press", so don't get discouraged by a few bad quotes or low media attendance. If people are talking about the issue, if it's being debated in the press, in schools, in supermarkets and elsewhere, your media work is a success!

Checklist for your media event

Craft your message

- What is your aim? Make sure your final communication relates to the campaign goal.
- Who is the audience? Target your communications to a specific audience relating to a decision maker or influencer – the 'general public' is too broad. Eg. The audience can be one person – or a specific demographic, like grocery purchasers.
- What is the message you want to communicate to them? Make sure you have only one simple message, and stay consistent. Relate the message to the level of awareness your audience is at.

- Test your message on a sample of your audience if you can. At the very least ask a few friends or colleagues how the message comes across to them.

Communicating your message

- How are you going to communicate it? This will relate to your audience. Eg. A heavy metal concert to promote buying GE free food is probably not going to appeal to the demographic of middle-aged female grocery buyers.
- There are many many media for communication – stickers, posters, radio, tv, word of mouth, t-shirts, stalls. Choose one that suits your audience and budget.

Holding an event for media

Before the event

- Make sure it is logistically possible for media to cover – 4:30pm is too late – 4 hours out of town is too far.
- Think about what the picture will be. Will it be a photo of the entire event, or an image from it like a close-up of someone's face. Are all the elements there? - images that convey the message, your organisation's name, banner.
- If you can, have your own photographer on hand and involve them in the discussions when you are constructing the idea in the first place.
- Check out the photo shoot site to find out what angle is best to shoot from, where the best place to set up is, what the light is like. Do it at the same time you want to hold your event. Think about logistics for photographers and videographers – do they need their own vehicle etc?
- Alert the media beforehand (unless it is a secret of course) – Write an alert with the time, date, place, and the juiciest details to entice them. Don't forget to send it to photography wire services - Reuters, AAP, AP, AFP. Send a fax or email media alert first then ring them to check they've received it. If it's a photo opportunity, make it sound exciting, not to be missed, a photo they are going to be able to sell to their subscribers (without saying that directly of course).
- Decide what grabs or soundbites your spokesperson will say. Write a Q&A with tricky questions they might get asked so they are prepared. Have handy facts and figures ready. Practice!
- Write a draft release (or a final if you know how events will happen) – add the latest details on the day.
- Decide on your media hit list. Who is the story relevant to? Eg. Trade magazines, television news, financial journalists, local and community media etc. Prioritise who to call first on the day – and have all their numbers printed out and with you.
- Charge your mobile phone if you have one.

On the day

- Designate one person to deal with media. Make sure you have press release handy for journalists and photographers who come. Take their names and the organisation they are from.
- Take care of the media's needs at the event. Ask if people need more information. Allow photographers to arrange the various elements of the photograph themselves. Cooperate with them as much as possible.
- If the wires photographers come they get their photos off as soon as possible. If relying on your own photographer, get the photos out to the wires as soon as possible. Make sure the photographer has the equipment to email the photos if they're high resolution digital or develop them quickly.
- Make follow up phone calls to make sure media knows about your event.

After the event

- Monitor the results – how did it come across? Save the clippings and analyse.
 - Evaluate and learn for next time.
-

SPEAKING AT PROTESTS

Who is your audience: _____

What are your grabs:

1) _____

2) _____

- BE CALM
- BE INSPIRING
- USE YOUR FACTS
- BE INCLUSIVE/ POSITIVE, NOT AGGRESSIVE/ NEGATIVE
- Have you recruited a good number of volunteers to be at the event?

- Who is sending out the press advisory?

- Who is making follow-up phone calls?

- Do you have good visuals arranged for your event?

- Do you have good soundbytes (quotes) memorised?

- Does everyone know who the media spokesperson is?
- Do you have answers ready for questions you expect to get from the press?
(Why are you here today? What do you want this supermarket to do? Isn't GE food okay by the Food Standards Authority?, Etc)
- Who is preparing materials for the press kit?
 1. Background information on the issue and your campaign, fact sheet
 2. Information on any speakers and their backgrounds, organisations, etc
 3. Copies of statements made at the event, any report released
 4. A copy of the press release

5. People to contact with further questions

- Who is sending the press release?
 - Who is doing follow-up calls?
-

Campaign Planning Strategy Chart

Goals	Organisational Considerations	Constituents, allies and opponents	Targets	Tactics
<p>1. List the long-term goal of your campaign</p> <p>2. State the intermediate goals of your campaign – what constitutes victory?</p> <p>How will the Campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win concrete improvements? • Give members a sense of their own power? <p>3. What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal?</p>	<p>1. List the resources your group brings to the campaign. Include money, staff, number of volunteers, time, facilities, reputation, canvass, etc</p> <p>What is the budget, including in-kind donations, for your campaign?</p> <p>2. List the specific ways in which you want your organisation to be strengthened by the campaign. Fill in realistic number goals for each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand your leadership group • Increase experience of existing leadership • Build membership base • Expand into new constituencies • Raise more money 	<p>1. who cares enough about this issue to join or help your group?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose problem is it? • What do they gain if they win? • What risks are they taking? • What power do they have over the target? • Into what groups are they organised? <p>2. Who are your opponents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will your victory cost them? • What will they do / spend to oppose you? • How strong are they? 	<p>1. primary target A target is always a person. It is never an institution or a government. Your target may be the supermarket CEO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are you asking to make the change you are demanding? • Who has the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them? <p>2. Secondary targets – like a local store manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who has the power over the people with the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them? 	<p>For each target, list the tactics that each constituent group can best use to affect them.</p> <p>Tactics must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In context • Flexible and creative • Directed at a specific target • Make sense to the membership • Be backed up by a specific form of power <p>Tactics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media events • Direct actions for information and demands • Public hearings • Strikes • Voter registration and voter education • Lawsuits • Elections • negotiations

***Strategy Guide** – taken from the Midwest Academy’s *Organising for Social Change*, third edition **See the Resources Section for more information on the Midwest Academy**

Campaign Planning Strategy Chart 2. Fictional Campaign Example

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, allies and opponents	Targets	Tactics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long-term: rid Modern Market's store brands of GE ingredients 2. Intermediate: get local store managers to contact and pressure Henry Oaks, CEO of Modern Market 3. Short-term: Get 1500 petition signatures to Jessica Smith, local store manager at the King Street store - Modern Market's highest selling store in the state 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resources to put in budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500.00 • \$250.00 raised from People's Co-op summer newsletter plea • rest to be raised locally through events, tabling, autumn People's Co-op newsletter plea and other donations • Kim and Jane can volunteer 2 days a week, Dave can volunteer 1 night a week, 20 volunteers to call on for events and weekly tabling • 1 computer with internet access, 2 phones, fax machine, printer and copier (low-volume copying only) 2. What we want to get out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the groups in the King St neighborhood with our campaign • Greater affiliation with a broad-based constituency throughout the state • Recruit 20 new volunteers in key areas of Georgetown, Emeryville, Scottston, Valley View and Ridgeway • Raise more money - \$1000 to cover initial 	<p>Constituents and Allies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anniston PTA • Anniston Food Policy Council • Valley View Unified School District Food Policy Board • Local chapter of Friends of the Earth • Mothers Against GE Food – Bendigo • Ridgeway Unified Church • People's Co-op natural food store • Local 246 – union picketing Modern Market for labor contract disputes • Students Against a Biotech Future <p>Opponents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local store managers • Biotech Responsibility Council at the University • CEO • Pro-biotech board members of the Food Policy Councils • Australian Food and Grocery Council • Agrifood Awareness 	<p>Primary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry Oaks, CEO of Modern Market <p>Secondary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store managers at top grossing locations • Store managers at locations near co-ops, natural food stores • Joseph Pickle – major stockholder in Modern Market • School district food boards – cut contracts with Modern Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media hits: rallies in front of key store locations, focus on food safety, direct actions, divestment campaign, school district contract cuts, etc • Set up community meetings with local store managers • Give supermarket tours every weekend • Table with factsheets and petitions every weekend at local stores • Petition drives in front of local stores and food and environmental events • Meetings at local food policy boards with key members of our allied Anniston Food Policy Council • Students Against a Biotech Future launch campus campaign to cut all contracts with Modern Market, demand shareholder divestment from University professors • Rally at the shareholders meeting in Valley View – urge local shareholders to divest • Place ad in

	<p>\$500, \$500 more to cover copying and phone for the year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key store managers aware and worried about our campaign 			<p>weeklies signed by Mothers Against GE Food in Sacramento talking about food safety, Modern Market and consumer demands – message and layout to be determined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles in key PTA and local group newsletters to alert Modern Market's key customers • Rally at CEO's office at Modern Market HQ in Ridgeway • Direct action with local 146 union chapter at Anniston distribution center – block shipments until CEO agrees to hear our concerns • Direct action at King Street store with Local community and Ridgeway Unified Church - remove GE store brand products until Modern Market will remove them themselves
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Campaign Planning Strategy Chart

Goals	Organisational Considerations	Constituents, allies and opponents	Targets	Tactics

Supermarket tour script

Go over ground rules: don't block aisles or otherwise impede other shoppers; please ask questions!

Fresh Produce

Most GE crops go into processed food, so most fresh produce is not GE. There were originally GE tomatoes and potatoes but both have been withdrawn from the market. Explain the process of genetic engineering: genes are associated with certain traits. Example: people with blue eyes have inherited the gene associated with blue eyes from both parents. However, one gene can code for more than one trait, so you might not inherit only blue eyes, but also short legs!

- Similarly, genes are associated with traits in plants, for example white or yellow corn;
- Genetic engineering can move genes from one species to another, in ways that are never possible with traditional breeding;
- Corn breeders could move genes between white and yellow corn, creating mixed varieties. But they could not move genes from animals into plants, which is currently happening in GE field experiments. For example, fish genes have been inserted into strawberries and tomatoes, though these products are not yet in stores.

Genetic engineering can have unexpected consequences. A lab study using GE yeast showed levels of a toxic substance that were 30-200 times higher than found in yeast naturally. A GE soybean with a gene from a Brazil nut triggered allergic reactions, even though the scientists thought that the gene they used from the nut would be harmless to people with nut allergies. The soybean was not marketed.

Snack Foods

Look for corn and potato chips. About 20% of the US corn crop is GMO. A lot of that gets imported into Australia for use in processed foods, like chips, or as corn syrup, oil and cornstarch. Much also goes for animal feed. There is a small amount of GMO corn grown for popcorn as well. Ajita's chips told their corn growers not to use GE seed, and says they will source non-GE potatoes also. However, the Snackfood company has not declared its policy on using GE in the food chain. In NZ, Tegel supplier of KFC announced that it will not feed any genetically engineered animal feed to its chickens. Over 70% of the GE crops fall into one of two categories: crops engineered to withstand application of chemical weed killers (called "herbicide tolerant" plants); or "plant pesticides," crops in which the plant is considered a pesticide (also called "insect resistant" crops). Most of the GE corn are this second type, and are called "Bt" crops.

- Bt: this is a natural bacteria that was found to be useful as an insecticide. Farmers have used this "biological" pest control as a spray since the early 1960's.
- Bt sprays are the only emergency pest control that organic growers are allowed to use. Losing the effectiveness of the Bt spray could be a huge problem for organic farmers.
- Studies have shown that insects develop resistance to the Bt in the plant fast. It has also shown to affect other species, apart from the pest it's intended to kill, eg the larvae of the Monarch butterfly.
- These "superbugs" created by Bt plants could put organic farmers out of business.

Salad Dressings

Most salad dressings use soy or canola oil. Along with corn, these are the most widely grown GE crops. In Australia the Gene Technology regulator will make a decision to approve GE Canola to be grown commercially. That will be the first major food crop to be grown commercially in Australia! Half of the US soy crop and over half of canola (mostly from Canada) is GE. Most soy and canola are herbicide tolerant varieties. About 70% of the acreage of GE crops are this kind of plant. The most widely grown herbicide tolerant variety is called "Roundup Ready" (RR), there is RR soy, canola, corn, cotton and sugar beet on the market. Monsanto makes the herbicide Roundup, and now they also make RR crops, which allow farmers to spray the chemical right on the crop. Roundup kills virtually any plant, but RR crops are not harmed by the chemical. Biotech companies say that GE crops will reduce chemical use, but studies show that farmers who grow RR soy use 2-5 times more herbicide than conventional growers do.

Baby Food

No one knows the long-term health effects of GE foods. FSANZ allows GE foods on the market with no independent testing because they say GE foods are the same as their natural counterparts. But scientists are saying that GE foods are different and could lead to different risks. Health concerns include unexpected allergies and unexpected toxins. Antibiotic resistance is also a concern. Many GE crops use genes for antibiotic resistance. If these genes transfer in the environment to disease-causing bacteria, this could lead to diseases that cannot be controlled with common medications. Thousands of doctors have called on the biotech industry to stop using antibiotic resistance genes. Yet these crops are still grown and making their way into our food. Greenpeace tested a Gerber cereal mix and found GE soy and corn. Concerned about consumer pressure, Gerber, Heinz and other manufacturers declared they will not use GE ingredients in baby food. Consumer pressure works!

Cotton Products (Diapers, tampons, cotton balls, etc)

We think of cotton as a fibre crop, but most of the plant goes for animal feed, and some for human food (as cottonseed oil). GMOs are a threat to the environment, so whatever the plants are being used for, even non-food crops, are part of this ecological experiment. The spread of "exotic" plants and other species is the second-leading cause of extinction. Exotics are species that are released into an environment in which that species did not evolve. Ecologists warn that GMOs are "exotic" species by definition. When these new genes move from one species to another, they could create uncontrollable weeds, or otherwise alter the natural landscape. Once released into the environment, GMOs cannot be recalled. The environmental damage is irreversible.

Cereal

Supermarkets carry many brands, often including their own store brand. If you don't want GMOs in their store brand corn flakes, you need to tell them - consumer pressure can work! In Britain, consumers asked supermarkets to stop using GMOs in their store brands; today, virtually every major chain there has eliminated GMOs. Many say they will also stop using GMOs as animal feed, so their meat and poultry products will be GE-free. Kelloggs has told Europeans they will stop using GMOs, but here they are not giving any assurances. Companies like Nestle, Kraft, McDonalds and others also have this double standard.

Back to Fresh Produce

With a limited amount of GE-free brands and an insufficient labelling system of GE in the food chain, the best way to avoid GMOs is to buy fresh produce, other whole foods (nuts, grains, beans, rice, etc), and organic food as much as possible. The

same companies that have sold pesticides for the past 50 years are now selling GMOs. These companies say that pesticides are safe and environmentally friendly. The evidence of the past 50 years shows that pesticides have been an environmental and public health menace. Recent studies show that herbicides and insecticides in the environment effect the immune system, hormone levels, and brain functioning, and that children are especially at risk.

Now the companies that brought us toxic pesticides are trying to genetically alter all of our food. They say that GE crops are safe and environmentally friendly. They say GE crops can replace pesticides. But they still sell pesticides, and now they link their toxic chemicals to GE crops. The real solution to pesticide use is truly sustainable agriculture. For example, organic production, which by definition excludes the use of GE crops. Organic farms:

- Promote health of the entire farming system - soil, crops, animals, and people.
- Are not "old fashioned," but based on modern, scientific concepts of agroecology:
- Farm problems are not viewed as battles against nature, but resolved in harmony with natural cycles.
- Are certified by independent agencies. These are the Australian logos to watch out for

Organic food is popular

It is the fastest growing segment of the food industry: at 20% per year, the organic industry is a \$6 billion a year business, growing faster than computers or telecommunications. Other than in supermarkets, you can also get organics at health food stores, farmer's markets or through organic produce delivery services.

Organic food is sometimes more expensive

However, the health and environmental costs of pesticides in the U.S. have been estimated at as much as \$4 billion a year. These are costs that we all pay through higher taxes, expensive health care, environmental clean-up, etc. Chemical companies and industrial farms get huge subsidies from our tax dollars. Over 99 percent of government research and development funding goes to biotech and chemical farming. There is no level playing field for organic farmers. If organics were supported like industrial farming, the price would go down and we would avoid the costs associated with industrial farming.

When more people buy organic food, the price will go down, as currently organic farmers are struggling with a small and select market which often involves extra cost.

We are spending less and less money on food. It has been shown that the percentage of our income which we spend on food is constantly going down. However, food is life and health. Organic food is more likely to be higher in nutrient levels, as its farming methods put nutrients back into the soil which then go into our food. Absorbing vitamins and minerals in its natural form is what our body is meant to do. So, buying organic food can be seen as an investment into health and a better quality life.

GE crops are potentially more dangerous than farm chemicals

Pesticide pollution is long lasting, but attempts can be made to clean it up or contain it. GE crops, once they are released into the environment, cannot be recalled. Genes can't be traced or stopped. The only way to avoid genetic pollution is to stop the release of GE crops.

GE in supermarkets - factsheet

The secret ingredient

As an Australian, chances are you have already eaten genetically engineered (GE) foods. Without warning or notice you have partaken in a dangerous experiment.

Thousands of products on the shelves of your local supermarket contain GE ingredients – foods from crops that have not evolved in natural ways, from crops that have never before been part of the human diet.

Look at the ingredient list on any of the packaged foods in the supermarket. You are almost certain to find ingredients made from corn, soy, canola or cottonseed oil. These ingredients commonly come from plants that have been genetically altered and are being grown on millions of acres in the United States, Argentina, Canada and now even Australia. For example, soy ingredients like lecithin, soy oil, and soy protein are found in 60 to 70 percent of all processed foods.

Yet you won't find "genetically engineered" on the label of many products containing GE ingredients. The labelling regulations exclude refined ingredients, such as oils, starches and sugars, as well as animal products from animals raised on a diet of genetically engineered feed.

Most supermarket chains have their own store brands, which are made to their specifications. All of these brands are aimed at customer loyalty, and are the pride of their companies.

Supermarkets can influence the production of food right through the food chain. When a major supermarket eliminates GE from their food chain they force food manufacturers down the line to also go GE-free.

Major supermarkets in Europe; Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencers, have already committed to removing GE ingredients from their store brand products, as have three national chains in the US, Trader Joe's, Whole Food Markets and Wild Oats.

Australian supermarkets can follow their lead and go GE-free from paddock, to plate.

Woolworths (trading as Safeway in Victoria) is the largest supermarket in Australia and has 28 percent of the \$65 billion food retail market. Together, Coles and Woolworths dominate 50 percent of the market. Neither of these companies have committed to going GE-free including in GE derived ingredients and animal feed, in their own brand products. There are also many independent supermarkets that have not made any commitment to remove GE from their food chain.

Multiple risks and little testing

Unlike traditional crop or animal breeding, genetic engineering enables scientists to cross genes from bacteria, viruses, and even humans into plants and animals. Never before have scientists been able to break the species barrier. Strawberries and flounder could never breed on their own, but with genetic engineering lab tests, fish genes have been spliced into strawberries. There have been no long-term studies on what impact these crops may have on the environment, but scientists are already finding signs of trouble:

- **Biological pollution:** Unlike chemicals that are released into the environment, genetically engineered organisms are living things that will reproduce and spread uncontrollably and at will, with little possibility of containment or clean-up.
- **Increased pesticide use:** Most GE crops have been designed to withstand herbicides. Studies show that farmers who grow GE soybeans use 2-5 times more herbicides than farmers who grow natural soy varieties.
- **Superweeds:** Other studies have shown that GE crops can cross-pollinate with related weeds, resulting in “superweeds” that become difficult to control. Canadian canola growers have found weeds in their fields resistant to Round-Up and Liberty herbicides, forcing the growers to use more potent toxic herbicides.
- **Threat to organics:** GE insect resistant crops could create “superbugs” who will build up a tolerance to a fundamental pest control tool used by organic farmers; the loss of this tool would be devastating to the safest, most environmentally friendly food production we have.

The Health Risks

The genetic engineering industry claims that no one has been harmed by eating GE foods. But without labelling of GE ingredients, there is no way to track any harm. Doctors and scientists warn that there is not enough evidence to insure that these foods are safe in the human diet. Medical experts, including over 2,000 doctors and health professionals in Germany and the British Medical Association, have questioned the safety of GE foods. In fact, there is ample evidence of risk:

- **Allergies:** By inserting foreign DNA into common foods, without adequate safety testing, the biotech industry is introducing possible new food allergens.
- **Antibiotic resistance:** The rise of diseases that are resistant to treatment with common antibiotics is already a serious medical concern. Doctors warn that the current use of antibiotic resistance genes in GE crops may add to this risk.

In short, genetic engineering is an unpredictable technology that, for the sake of corporate profits, puts our environment and health at risk.

Take Action!

- Call, fax or write your local supermarket manager or CEO and demand that they rid their store brands of GE ingredients just as European and American supermarkets have already done. Join the Greenpeace True Food Network at: www.greenpeace.org.au/truefood. Giving you a monthly update of which companies have changed their policy and connect you with others active to make our supermarkets GE-free to build a GE-free community.

Customer Relations Department
Coles Head Office
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Glen Iris
Victoria 3146

To whom it may concern

RE: GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD.

As a customer of Coles I am opposed to the use of genetically engineered organisms and do not wish to buy products that come from genetically engineered plants or animals. This includes products sourced from animals that have been fed on GE feed.

Whilst Coles may have taken genetically engineered ingredients out of some of its own products, in the interest of customer health and the environment, I ask that you remove all GE derived ingredients (including GE animal feed) from those products under your control.

- Genetic engineering is unpredictable. Once released, the effects of GE crops are uncontrollable and potentially devastating. The long-term effects of GE foods on people and animals are unknown. Coles' commitment to the environment should reflect this in their foods.
- People oppose genetic engineering for ethical, religious and environmental reasons. These people should have the chance to say no to genetically engineered food.

Please provide me with an assurance that Coles will ensure that none of its own brand or on-site produced foods use GE foods anywhere in the food chain, including GE animal feed.

Yours sincerely,

Signature:

Date:

Name:

Address: