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## **Monsanto to fight GM contaminated organic farmer WA government hides GM canola test results**

**Wednesday, 23 December, 2010: A West Australian organic farmer is in limbo, awaiting state government test results and facing genetic manipulation giant Monsanto's legal wrath. Steve Marsh's organic farm has been decertified over GM canola contamination from a neighbour's farm.**

**Monsanto revealed today \* that it would give legal support to the GM grower if Mr Marsh sought redress for his losses through the courts.**

"For years we called for Farmer Protection laws because GM contamination was inevitable once the Gene Technology Regulator issued unrestricted and unconditional commercial licences," says Gene Ethics Executive Director, Bob Phelps.

"And just this week, the regulator has licensed Monsanto trials of GM canola designed to survive even more repeated sprayings of Roundup herbicide. This will add to the burden of unmanageable herbicide tolerant weeds that already cost Australian land managers over \$4 billion per year.

"The West Australian Government sampled the GM canola contaminating 60% of Steve Marsh's land weeks ago but Agriculture Minister Terry Redman is keeping the test results secret until Christmas eve, at the earliest.

"Yet Steve's own strip tests found GM canola on his land and last week his organic certifier NASAA [National Association of Sustainable Agriculture Australia] confirmed GM and suspended his certification for at least a year. Steve has lost the premiums that come from marketing his organic produce that has zero tolerance for anything GM, as Organic Standard AS6000 requires.

"That's typical of how the minister treats farmers. Redman has not kept one promise on GM canola segregation and handling, despite claiming 'GM and non-GM canola can be segregated and marketed separately,' when he lifted the GM ban this year. He also wshed on his promise to publish the sites of GM canola farms so that non-GM growers could take evasive action.

"Monsanto's Tony May was present when Redman lifted the GM canola ban and he also sold 20% of the state's public plant breeding company intergrain to Monsanto for a song. They immediately announced that GM wheat is their joint research priority.

"Minister Redman has a responsibility to pass Farmer Protection laws early in 2011 to compensate organic farmer Steve Marsh and all the other growers who will be GM contaminated.

"Minister Redman must give Steve Marsh the Christmas present he needs, by announcing the GM test results today and promising a Farmer Protection law. He must give all farmers the non-GM crop choices that he promised, without economic loss or decertification from GM canola contamination," Mr Phelps concludes.

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

\* <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/industry-sectors/gm-strain-blows-organic-status-away/story-e6frg95o-1225975191363> The Australian, December 23. *More background and media reports: [www.geneethics.org](http://www.geneethics.org)*

### **Further information or interviews:**

**Bob Phelps, Gene Ethics (03) 9347 4500, 0449 769 066**

**Steve Marsh, organic farmer: 08 9833 1225 - best times are 12-1pm WST (3-4 pm AEST) or in the evening)**