

Submission to the Australia New Zealand Food Authority on
Application A387 High oleic acid soybeans; A346, A355, A362, and A363

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The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 46 nationally organised societies. It has 35 branches spread throughout the country to which women from some 150 societies are affiliated.

The nucleus members of the Consumer Affairs Committee of NCWNZ have much pleasure in forwarding their comments on Applications A346 insect protected corn; A355 glyphosate tolerant cotton; A362 glyphosate tolerant corn; A363 glyphosate tolerant canola and A387 high oleic acid soybean lines.

We have studied all these applications in some detail and with much interest but much of the technical data we believe is beyond our competency as consumers to make comment. However we would like to make the following general observations:

The Regulatory Impact Assessment concludes that “the benefits of the proposed Standard A18 amendment to approve food from high oleic acid soybeans primarily accrue to the food industry and government, with potentially a small benefit to the consumer” (Page 12 para 2) A387.

Similar statements are made in the other applications.

In the case of A387 we believe there are substantial differences between high oleic acid soybeans and non-GM varieties of soybean and that the fatty acid profile is substantially different.

Page 3 i para 4 “The most significant changes are to the oleic and linoleic acid content – the oleic acid content has been increased from 23.1% in the parental soybean to 83.8% in the high oleic acid soybeans and the linoleic acid content has been reduced from 5.4% to 2.2%”.

The reduction in linoleic is disappointing as linoleic acid is an essential fatty acid. We believe this change alone, as well as other minor changes, does demand labelling.

Highly refined oils are exempt from labelling under the proposed requirements, so presumably high oleic soybean oils and product used in the manufacture of prepared foods will also be exempt, eliminating the consumers right to choose.

In all these applications we believe it is difficult to support the introduction of such technologies when there is no independent scientific body designated and adequately funded to test and evaluate the data provided by the applicants with their heavily vested interests. In view of the conflicting and contradictory data available to the public we believe such an independent scientific body is the only way to ensure that consumer interests are adequately considered and protected.

Conclusion

NCWNZ continues to recommend that where substantial differences are detected in G-M foods these products must be labelled. We also advocate that an adequately funded independent scientific body to evaluate data be established as soon as possible.

Barbara Glenie
National President

Marie Taylor
Convener, Consumer Affairs Standing Committee