

Pure Hawke's Bay

Vision Statement

Pure Hawke's Bay represents a growing number of growers and producers who propose this vision for Hawke's Bay: **we see Hawke's Bay as a food producing region of world renown, famous for producing food sustainably, with integrity.**

Across the region, farmers, growers, wineries and food processors are working hard to develop products of quality. In a world of increasing competition, we will need to work hard to earn a singular reputation as a premium food producing region and set our products apart.

Building and capitalizing upon that reputation will depend on perceptions and branding as well as ability to demonstrate, unequivocally, that the region is committed in practice, not just in word, to sustainability. Consumer resistance to GM foods in many of our key markets is strong and growing.

Within that context, our greatest concern is the risk that genetically modified (GM) food production and outdoor field trials involving GMOs might be introduced to the region. This would have devastating consequences for food exporters and would damage the Bay's brand in international markets. Many growers would lose markets, forfeit market premiums and buyer confidence.

And while we respect the right of each farmer/grower to make their own decisions about what approaches best suit their land and production, we are all in this together – if field use of GMOs resulted in contamination of other crops, which we believe would be inevitable, this damage would be irreversible. Given consumer and buyer perceptions about contamination, a decision by an individual grower or farmer would affect all food producers and processors in the region.

Consequently, for the foreseeable future (we propose ten years), Pure Hawke's Bay endorses a prohibition on GM field trials and food production in Hawke's Bay. And we call for this to be ratified in the District Plans of our five territorial councils, as well as in the Regional Policy Statement of the Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

It is undisputed that local authorities may secure the region's GM free food producer status under the Resource Management Act. National legislation does not ensure our ability to seize this opportunity for the region – the regulator could approve a release here at any time irrespective of whether it is in the region's interest to remain GM Free.

In proposing a 'moratorium' on GM introduction to Hawke's Bay, we are not opposing continued laboratory research into genetic modification. That said, irrespective of any merits of the science, the market reality is stark: for now GM is simply not wanted by many of our high value markets, and in this competitive market, overseas buyers will take their business elsewhere if they perceive a risk of contamination. Meantime, many other scientific and technological innovations can be pursued to advance the productivity of our farming and the quality of our produce.

Preserving Hawke's Bay's current status as a GM Free food producer is not just about risk. It is about opportunity. Announcing to the world that Hawke's Bay is a GM free food producer would be a foundation stone of our reputation as a trusted source of premium, high quality food, where growers are closely aligned to the values and aspirations of our customers.