

Call for adequate labelling of GM food

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**Conservation Council calls for clear labels to avoid GM food confusion**  
**BEATRICE THOMAS (The West Australian, Monday August 2, 2008)**

Genetically modified food labelling is inadequate and confusing for consumers, according to the Conservation Council of WA, which has called for better standards.

The council's sustainable agriculture spokeswoman, Maggie Lilith, said many European Union countries had successfully implemented strict labelling on GM ingredients and there was no reason why it could not be done in Australia .

"We've got no labelling at all so that gives no one any choice," she said. "We don't know whether (ingredients are) derived from GM canola or GM soy so people can't avoid it. It's inadequate testing at this stage and there's not enough studies that have been done and no long-term generational studies."

The council, which has also urged the State to extend its moratorium on growing GM crops, demonstrated its point on Friday when members visiting Health Minister Jim McGinty's office put their concerns to Federal MHR for Fremantle Melissa Parke.

The council presented them with two baskets of food - one containing suspected unlabeled GM ingredients and the other with non-GM food - to show how confusing current labelling was. "Most people who are health conscious and want it avoid it, well, they haven't got two hours to spend in the supermarket," Dr Lilith said.

The national food regulator, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, says that margarine and other oils made from GM seeds do not need to be labelled because the refining process removes DNA and protein contained in the seed. But some health experts have said that oil made from GM crops such as canola or cotton could still contain small amounts of engineered DNA and proteins.

The City of Fremantle is the first in WA to commit to a GM-free food policy on all food-related services, with Fremantle mayor Peter Tagliaferri saying there were too many health concerns and unanswered questions.

The Federal Government last month dismissed calls from Premier Alan Carpenter for a nationwide suspension of approvals for foods from engineered crops, saying Australia already had rigorous GM food assessment standards.

Ms Parke said she would pass on the group's concerns to Federal Agriculture Minister Tony Burke.

Mr McGinty said the WA Government had the strongest anti-GM food policy in Australia .