



For Immediate Release Wed 28th May 2014

Mothers are Demystifying Genetic Engineering (MADGE) is alarmed by the Western Australia Supreme Court judgement today, which rejected the compensation claim for GM contamination by Steve Marsh in his landmark court case against his GM canola-growing neighbour.

“The right to farm and eat GM-Free is now in doubt” said Jessica Harrison, MADGE co-founder. We want to eat without the threat of GM contamination. This judgement leaves farmers and families facing an uncertain future.

Justice Kenneth Martin dismissed both the Marsh’s causes of action in “common law negligence” (breach of a duty of care, to ensure no escape of GM material) and “private nuisance”. Steve Marsh was not awarded damages and failed in his attempt to have a permanent injunction against his neighbour “swathing” during harvest (leaving the cut crop in the paddock until final collection).

Steve Marsh, an organic farmer from Kojonup, south of Perth, lost organic certification for most of his farm when GM canola contaminated his crop in 2010. His only legal recourse was to sue his farmer neighbour, Michael Baxter. The case ended on Feb 28th 2014 and is receiving worldwide attention.

“GM crops cause unfair stress and set farmer against farmer. Liability for GM contamination is accepted by the GM farmer when they grow a GM crop. This judgement may be in his favour, but Michael Baxter, signed an unfair contract where Monsanto, the owner of the patent, has no responsibility for GM contamination.

“MADGE supports Farmer Protection Legislation and a “Farmers Protection Fund” which levies GM seed sales as a fairer way to deal with inevitable GM contamination.

“We are worried now about choosing GM-free food for our families. Steve will be concerned that damage and loss from GM contamination will impact on his farm again, through no fault of his own. This is unfair to every non-GM farmer in Australia, and leaves farmers in an untenable situation.

“Steve has stood up for mothers and non-GM farmers everywhere, with just cause. He has our full support.

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