

# For Biotech Crops Down Under, Logic Rules

By ACSH Staff — September 18, 2015



Organic farmers must obey certain guidelines to be in compliance with

organic rules for example they can't grow genetically engineered (GM) crops, use synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. They have on some occasions complained that neighboring farmers put their organic crops at risk if wind-blown pollen from non-organic crops (especially genetically engineered ones) drift into their fields and "contaminate" their crops.

Well, last year in Australia, an organic farmer actually [sued](#) <sup>[1]</sup> a neighbor because, he claimed, some of the neighbor's GM canola blew onto his field, which resulted in some of his crop losing its organic certification. At first, a court ruled in his favor, but the Australian Court of Appeals reversed that ruling. The Appeals court said that a farmer who grows an unusually sensitive crop cannot impose limits on the activities of their neighbors.

"We could see this across a number of activities," said Federated Farmers president and science spokesman Dr William Rolleston, "be it spray drift or growing different seeds or even setting up a quarantine facility."

Dr. Ruth Kava, ACSH senior nutrition fellow, applauds the Australian appeals court decision, saying "it would be untenable for farmers who want to use the latest in agricultural technology to be restricted by the wishes of their neighbors. No one would advocate for conventional farmers to spray their insecticides or fertilizers on their neighbors' organic crops, but to expect them to control wind drift is totally unreasonable.

"Let's face it," Kava continued, "genetic engineering of crops is more efficient, uses fewer pesticides and potentially makes crops more resistant to environmental insults such as droughts. And it's spreading world wide. Hopefully this decision by the Australian court will inform those in other countries especially the United States."

For more scientifically sound information, see ACSH's publication, [Food and You](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, *A Guide to Modern Agricultural Biotechnology*.

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/rural/284500/federated-farmers-welcome-australian-gm-ruling>

[2] <http://acsh.org/2014/03/food-guide-modern-agricultural-biotechnology/>