Sent: Mon 14/05/2012 8:53 AM

Committee Secretary
Select Committee on Australia's Food Processing Sector
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Please keep my name and address confidential

Dear Select Committee Members,

As a member of the public with no connection to any organization or political party I would like to contribute my submission to the Senate Select Committee on Australia's Food Processing Sector, if it is not too late to do so.

Under terms of reference relating to labelling and to bio-security my comments are as follows:

a) **Labelling:**

Due to my family suffering from allergies we require food to be as pure and natural as possible. I have to know what types of ingredients and their origin are included in order to avoid allergic reactions so I spend hours in supermarkets reading labels trying to work it all out.

Increasingly, products included in processed foods are from international sources. Most labels state 'from local and international sources' or some such confusing statement. Therefore there is no guarantee of purity or lack of toxic substances or heavy metals.

Coles and Woolworths are now cram their shelves with their own branded goods many of which are not product of Australia, pushing iconic names off the shelves.

A product should not be labelled 'Product of Australia' or 'Made in Australia' unless it is wholly grown or produced here.

b) **Bio-security:**

So many of our successful companies have been taken over by international investors/owners, then they either cease production to stop competition, or they use cheaper products sourced from overseas which are not the same quality and purity grown here in Australia. Peanuts, for example, are sourced from China's toxic environment - our peanut industry in Queensland has suffered. Arnotts Biscuits, now foreign owned, and other biscuit producers are using inferior overseas ingredients and have changed in taste and quality. Various popular tinned fruit companies, now foreign owned, include more and more overseas product – affecting our fruit industries dramatically. Even meat advertisements now state 'Processed in Australia' without verifying the country of origin of the meat. It is outrageous that many companies have famous Australian brand labels yet they have no, or very little, Australian grown products. **The whole food industry is in need of label upgrading.**

More importantly, Australian farmers need our support to keep their industries viable. Competition from foreign imports of product and/or ingredients is placing our whole agricultural industry at risk. By companies sourcing ingredients from overseas they are putting enormous stress on our farmers, many going out of business as recently occurred with Heinz tomato canning farmers and processors in Victoria. **Our food industry needs to be reliable and totally viable.**

As a consumers and members of the general public, we do not wish to eat genetically modified foods. My family and friends also have said they will refuse to buy or eat such goods. There is no trust for large GM companies trying to gain world-wide control of their seeds and crops. Due to lax labelling laws GM foods can secretly be included in our foods. **Please urgently legislate to stop GM foods or for specific labelling of GM ingredients.**

I am disgusted to learn CSIRO, which I thought is an independent institution working in our interests, is in partnership with Monsanto to develop GM wheat. Wheat and other grains have grown and developed quite beautifully for many thousands of years and do not need to be played with genetically. Wheat can be consumed as low GI by diabetics etc when it is eaten in sourdough form, so there is no need.

No independent health test results about GM foods have been made available to the public, insinuating secrecy and deceit. Already in Western Australia, contamination from canola into an organic farm has led to a legal case, disproving Monsanto's claim that contamination would be impossible. GM food will not save the world as food problems are mostly caused by corrupt governments. GM companies are all about money and domination.

How can Australia enjoy a secure bio-future when so much of our agricultural land is being purchased by foreign investors. Such land will be used to grow crops to export to that particular country – meaning there is absolutely no benefit to Australia or to Australian companies.

Foreign purchasing of our land and companies should be minimised or ceased. New Zealand apparently has a limit of $5 million, whereas our limit is around $240 million. Our Foreign Investment Board is totally ignoring the public's enormous concern? 'The Weekly Times' newspaper most weeks has articles and comments of deep concern on this subject.

I cannot believe the Australian government is truly dedicated to Australian food security unless measures are put in place to protect our businesses, our farms, our food industry from going into foreign hands. Globalization appears to be an excuse for placing your head in the sand!

I buy foods produced by Dick Smith, Sanitarium, Nobbies and as many Australian owned brands as possible using all, or mostly, Australian products.

I will only have confidence buying products that are honestly labelled as 'Product of Australia' or 'Made in Australia' and that are genuine Aussie product.

Bio-security means protecting our food and land. Please legislate for it now.