

## **NZ Turns Against Biggest Trading Partner**

**Media Statement** 14 May 2003

“Why is New Zealand joining a fight that pits us against our biggest trading partner over products we do not even grow” asked Sustainability Council Chair, Sir Peter Elworthy.

Commenting on the Government’s decision to support the US in a WTO case against the European Union’s moratorium on GM release, Sir Peter said the move is “a blow to our marketing and to consumer perceptions of New Zealand”.

“Government less than a month ago published advice showing 20-30% of consumers would cease purchasing New Zealand goods if it released any GMOs. Now, before ERMA has even approved any such release as in the national interest, Government is effectively advertising New Zealand’s support for growing GM food.”

Europeans attitudes are crystal clear: official surveys record that 71% do not want to eat GM food. It is a big issue there as the same Eurobarometer surveys show a majority of Europeans judge GM foods “to be risky for society”.

“Just how are New Zealand’s interests advanced by backing America’s fight to tell Europeans what they should eat. Why brand New Zealand with the woes of American GM seed companies whose products are being rejected in the market?”

New Zealand is joining a fight that is not ours, about a product we don’t grow, and against the interests of food exporters who continually work to reassure customers our products are GM free.

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