

Could the Australian GMO-organic court case lead to global restrictions on biotech farming?

In 2010, a western Australia organic farmer, Steve Marsh, found that his harvest had been contaminated by his neighbor's genetically modified canola/rapeseed crops planted with Monsanto Roundup Ready seed. Marsh subsequently had 70% of his farm's organic status for produce stripped from him causing severe financial harm, some \$85,000 in earnings. In a first of its kind lawsuit, Marsh is suing his neighbor for the loss resulting from the seeds blowing onto his oat and wheat crop, contaminating them.

The significance of the case is that if Marsh can successfully defend his property rights, it will create a disincentive for farmers to use GM seeds if they know they will be held liable for the equivalent of "polluting" a neighbor's property. Just as a company can be held liable for toxic runoff that contaminates an adjacent piece of land, this lawsuit seeks to hold GM farmers liable for their "runoff" that ruins a neighbor's livelihood.

But the lawsuit could cut both ways if successful, because it may cause Australia to relax its otherwise-strict zero-tolerance policy toward GM produce. Unlike the U.S. and elsewhere where the probability of cross-contamination is acknowledged and trace amounts of GMOs are permitted in crops that are otherwise labeled "organic," Australia doesn't have that distinction. Organic means 100% organic with no trace GMOs permitted, and that might change in a bid to allow peaceful coexistence. But if Marsh loses the case, then GM farmers and Monsanto can rest easy knowing they'll be able to plant their lab-altered seed without consequence.

Read the full, original article: [Monsanto's GMO Seeds May No Longer Be Invincible](#)