

## How private, profit-driven investment shapes GM industry

Research into GM crops has always been largely driven by the private sector, even though a 2000 report from the Commonwealth Biotechnology Ministerial Council emphasised the need for government support for an emerging, and potentially lucrative, industry. The report noted high levels of private investment in biotechnology in North America, Canada and Japan, and calls for government support to help Australia compete. According to the authors this should include intellectual property protection, and work to “build community confidence in biotechnology” as well as increase funding. Much of the research into biotechnology carried out by academics, public research institutions and even non-profit organisations is shaped by the push towards “public-private partnerships”.

Private investment does not guarantee poor outcomes, but we should also be sceptical of claims that it has no effect on technological development. The drive for profits encourages:

- a reliance on monocultures
- a focus on cash crops rather than food crops
- legislation against comprehensive food labelling
- restrictive intellectual property regimes.

This is happening at a time when the world needs resilient, sustainable food systems that preserve crop biodiversity, responsive democratic legislation and a massive overhaul of restrictive national and international intellectual property law. We can't simply accept at face value claims that private interests will align neatly with public needs.

**Read the full, original article:** [How private funding influences GM research](#)