28 May 2018

Position Statement

Genetic Modification (GM) and the Australian Chicken Meat Industry

Australian meat chickens are not genetically modified[1].

Improvements in their growth, feed conversion efficiency, tenderness and other characteristics are entirely due to traditional selective breeding[2] techniques, coupled with improved nutrition, health management and husbandry.

GM ingredients in chicken feed

Feed that contains GM ingredients has no impact on the chicken meat in any way.

The chicken's digestive processes break all ingredients down into their chemical components which are the same as for non-GM ingredients. Consequently, there is no difference in the meat.

Food safety regulators and the broader scientific community agree that the use of genetically modified animal feed does not represent a safety concern for consumers.

Livestock feed ingredients that may have been derived from genetically modified plants include:

* Soybean meal
* Canola seed and canola meal
* Cottonseed and cottonseed meal

Some animal and human nutritional products, including vitamins and amino acids, and feed and food enzymes, may be produced in fermentation systems using GM microbes. However, there are no GM organisms remaining in the end products that may end up as ingredients in livestock feeds.

The two main ingredients in Australian chicken feed – wheat and sorghum – are not GM.

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[1] *Genetic modification' (GM) is a method of developing new breeds or strains of plants or animals with desired traits, usually by transferring a sequence of DNA into a plant or animal in which it does not naturally occur.*

[2] *Selective breeding' is a method of developing plants or animals with desired traits by breeding an animal that has a desirable trait with another of the same trait, so that the desired trait is reinforced. This method, sometimes called conventional breeding, uses the natural variation which exists in a population of animals and has been practiced for thousands of years.*

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