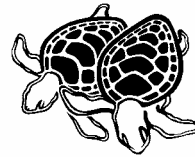




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Environment Centre NT - since 1983

MEDIA RELEASE

16 October, 2006

Call for Federal Government to reject GM cotton in northern Australia at campaign launch

The Northern Australia Environment Alliance today launched a campaign calling on the Federal Government to reject applications to introduce Genetically Manipulated (GM) Cotton into Northern Australia. The launch coincides with the Australian National Committee for Irrigation and Drainage (ANCID) conference in Darwin, where GM cotton is a hot topic.

“The ANCID Conference claims to be: “the best opportunity for industry participants, policy makers and researchers to deliver their key messages of relevance to Australia” and so is the appropriate platform from which to warn policy makers and the public about the risks posed by GM crops in Northern Australia,” said Cairns and Far North Environment Centre spokesperson Steve Ryan.

“Extensive land clearing, over consumption of water and excessive chemical use are by-products of this industry. We do not want to be the testing ground for risky new genetically manipulated cotton that could threaten our wildlife and leave us with insecticide resistant insects,” said Maria Mann from Environs Kimberley.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator recently gave approval for the commercial release of Liberty Link® Cotton anywhere in Australia. The Regulator is now considering another application, this time from Monsanto, for the commercial release of Bollgard II®/Roundup Ready Flex® GM cotton into northern Australia.

“Any approvals will overturn a 2002 decision by the Regulator not to allow the commercial introduction of GM cotton north of 22°S. This decision was made in view of weed threats posed to northern Australia by large scale irrigated agriculture based on GM cotton. It is our view that the risks remain and further approvals should not be given by the Regulator,” said Larissa Cordner from The Wilderness Society.

As part of the campaign the Northern Australia Environment Alliance launched *the great northern cotton takeover!* a brochure outlining the serious threat to northern Australia posed by the introduction of GM cotton. The brochure outlines the scope of the proposed agricultural developments and provides advice on how to take action to prevent it. The Briefing Paper *Genetically Manipulated Cotton in Northern Australia* was also released.

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