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*From the Chief Scientific Adviser to HM Government and Head of the Office of Science and Technology
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Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP
Secretary of State
Dept for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
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S26097

21 January 2004

Dear Margaret,

GM SCIENCE REVIEW: SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

On behalf of the GM Science Review Panel, I am pleased to send you a copy of the two reports produced by the Panel, which has now concluded its work. The Second Report, which is published today, supplements the First Report which was published last July and which we have now reprinted.

In undertaking this review you asked me, as the Government's chief scientific adviser, together with Professor Howard Dalton, the chief scientific adviser to Defra, to assess the current state of knowledge on GM issues, focussing on public concern about the potential risks to human health or the environment from GM crops and food.

Last autumn, after publishing our First Report, we reconvened to continue to take an open look at the science relevant to GM crops and food. We considered: comments on our First Report; the results of the GM Public Debate, 'GM Nation?', to see if there were further issues we should address; and any significant further developments in the science, including the results of the GM Crop Farm-Scale Evaluations (FSEs). We also separately submitted our opinion on the FSE results to the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment in December, and this is included in the present supplementary report.



Our First Report stated that we had found no scientific case for ruling out all GM crops and their products, but nor did it give them blanket approval. We emphasised that genetic modification is not a single homogeneous technology and that its applications need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Whilst our Second Report does not alter this general conclusion, we have been prompted to clarify a number of points and explore some issues in more detail and I hope that you will find this helpful in your policy deliberations.

I am copying this letter, together with both reports, to the Prime Minister, to Allan Wilson at the Scottish Executive, to Carwyn Jones at the National Assembly for Wales, and to Mrs Angela Smith, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office.

I am also copying the letter and reports to Professor Malcolm Grant, chair of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission, and also to Ian Coates, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit.

As ever

David

Sir David King