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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Jennifer Thomson, hereby confirm that I am an independent scientist and currently a professor in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of Cape Town. I have been involved in researching biotechnology projects locally and in Africa for the past 15 years.

I was a member with several other scientists of the SAGENE committee in 1990 that set up the guidelines for GMO use in this country before the GMO Act was passed by parliament. I was also a member of the drafting committee that wrote the strategic document on biotechnology that was approved by the South African cabinet.

Genetically modified engineered crops/food (GMOs) have been commercially produced for the past eleven years, nine in South Africa.

The Department of Molecular and Cell Biology of the University of Cape Town is constantly in touch with universities and scientific institutions world-wide and closely monitors the development of agricultural biotechnology through scientific data we receive on a regular basis and through personal visits to overseas scientific institutions from time to time.

To date there is no peer reviewed substantiated scientific evidence whatsoever available anywhere in the world to prove that GM food poses a health risk to man or animals, or that it could contaminate the environment; nor of any negative reactions to human or animal health anywhere in the world as a result of GMO food.

If there were, the scientific and medical fraternity in South Africa would have been made aware thereof but no such reports have materialised.

Prof. Jennifer Thomson
BSc MA PhD
Chair, AATF (African Agricultural Technology Foundation)
Chair, NBAC (National Biotechnology Advisory Committee)

PAPER PRESENTED BY PROF JENNIFER A THOMSON

Prof Thomson, a world-renowned scientist, is Professor in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of Cape Town. She is past Head of the Department of Microbiology (1988-2000) and Deputy Dean, Faculty of Science (1996-1998). She has held posts up to Associate Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, was Visiting Scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1982-1983), and Director of the Laboratory for Molecular and Cell Biology of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, South Africa (1984-1987). She was a Research and Teaching Fellow at Harvard University USA (1974-1977).

Prof Thomson is a recipient of the L'Oréal/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Award as the most outstanding woman scientist in Africa 2004 for her work in genetic engineering.

She was a member of the SAGENE committee that set up the guidelines for GMO use in this country, prior to the GMO Act being passed by parliament. She was also a member of the drafting committee that wrote the strategy document on biotechnology that was approved by the South African cabinet.