

KEEP GM POTATOES OUT OF SA

THE Agricultural Research Council is to apply to have genetically modified potatoes released to farmers in South Africa (*The Mercury*, July 23), despite the major processors of potatoes in this country indicating reluctance to use them.

In the United States genetically modified

potatoes had to be shelved because of consumer resistance, and Egypt terminated its GM potato project as its major trading partner, the European Union, refused to purchase them.

South Africa exports 43 million kilograms of potatoes to the Southern African Development

Community countries, some of which will definitely not purchase GM varieties. For example, Kenya will soon import one million bags of maize from Zambia which it has chosen over South Africa, apparently to have GM-free maize.

Any savings GM potatoes bring to the South

African food industry could be a drop in the ocean when compared with the cost to human health and the environment, as well as the threat to our potato export market. This application should be turned down.

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