

MacGibbon, 2002



<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0207/S00083/hagers-facts-fine-environment-ministry-ceo.htm>

Hager's Facts Fine – Environment Ministry CEO

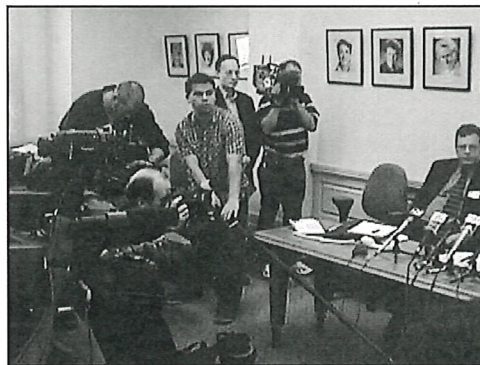
Thursday, 11 July 2002, 2:52 pm
Article: Guy MacGibbon



Science Minister Pete Hodgson (right) makes the introductions

The information presented in Nicky Hager's *Seeds of Distrust* is largely factually accurate, Ministry for the Environment Chief Executive Barry Carbon said today.

However, Mr Carbon said he disagreed with the conclusions Mr Hager reached in the book, which alleges the Government covered up the botched testing for GM contamination of sweetcorn seed imported from the United States.



Intense media interest

"I have a very high level of confidence that there was no cover-up," Mr Carbon told reporters at a press conference arranged to defend the integrity of public servants whose competence was brought into question by Mr Hager's book.

But he said there was conflicting opinions and confusion within the bureaucracy about the criteria for testing for GM contamination at the time.

He said that when Environmental Risk Management Authority scientists were asked if the findings meant the corn was contaminated, not one said it did. But when asked for a 100 per cent categorical guarantee that the corn was not contaminated with GM, the scientists could not, because the science is not exact.

State Services Commissioner Michael Winteringham told the assembled media that while it was unusual for public servants to speak out during an election campaign for reasons of neutrality, the effects of Mr Hager's revelations were a matter of national importance.



Head of the Ministry for the Environment Barry Garben (centre) faces reporters