

## If You're Concerned about GMOs

- ▶ **Buy products that certify** that all of the ingredients are organic. In spite of recent USDA proposals to soften organic regulations by allowing GMO crops, the idea was roundly rejected by the public.
- ▶ **Express your concerns** to food producers. Contact the makers of your favorite products and let them know you don't want GMO foods. Most product labels offer a toll-free number.
- ▶ **Inform governmental agencies** that you expect labeling and testing of GMO foods that are on the market.
- ▶ **Contact the Food & Drug Administration** (FDA) about the lawsuit to demand labeling and testing of GMO foods.

Include the docket number:  
U.S. District Court for D.C.  
Docket No. 98-CV-1300 (CKK)  
Jane Henney, Commissioner  
Food & Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471  
Rockville, MD 20857

- ▶ **Contact the Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) regarding the lawsuit asking them to take GMO crops that contain Bt (corn, cotton and potatoes) off the market until further testing is done to evaluate their environmental risks and potential threats to organic farmers.

Include the docket number:  
US District Court for D.C.  
Docket No. 99-CV-389 (LFO)  
Carol M. Browner, Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
401 M Street, SW, Room W1200  
Washington, DC 20460



**Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy**  
2105 1st Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-870-3424 • e-mail: jchristensen@iatp.org



**TWIN CITIES NATURAL  
FOOD CO-OPS, INC.**

**Lakewinds Natural Foods**  
17523 Minnetonka Blvd.  
Minnetonka: 612-473-0292

**Seward Community Co-op**  
2111 E. Franklin Ave.  
Minneapolis: 612-338-2465

**Linden Hills Co-op**  
2813 43rd St.  
Minneapolis: 612-922-1159

**Valley Co-op**  
215 N. William St.  
Stillwater: 651-439-0366

**Mississippi Market**  
1810 Randolph Ave.  
St. Paul: 651-690-0507  
—and—  
622 Selby Ave.  
St. Paul: 651-224-1300

**Valley Natural Foods**  
14015 Grand Ave.  
Burnsville: 612-892-6661

**Wedge Community Co-op**  
2105 Lyndale Ave. So.  
Minneapolis: 612-871-3993

Genetic Engineering  
and the Food Supply

Genes are the "blueprints" that make living things unique, i.e. why a potato is different from a tomato. In nature, different types of tomatoes may exchange genetic information with other tomatoes; that's how we get hybrids.

However, genetically engineered food means artificially transferring genes from one species to another. For example, animal genes could be inserted into fruits and vegetables. This process creates organisms that have new combinations of genes, and therefore new combinations of traits that are not found in nature, and not possible through natural mechanisms. Such a technology is radically different from traditional plant and animal breeding. The end product of this process is called a "genetically modified organism" or GMO.

The Twin Cities Natural Food Co-ops stores do not support this trend toward genetically engineered food. We want consumers to have access to food products that are created as nature intended, nurtured from seed to table, without chemical or genetic interference.

### **Genetically Engineered Foods Currently on the Market**

Foods may be genetically engineered for a number of reasons, most commonly for resistance to pesticides, viruses, and insects, as well as increasing the product's shelf life. The following genetically engineered crops have already been approved for sale in the United States: soybeans (60 percent of all processed foods contain soy or soy lecithin), corn (not blue corn), canola, papaya, potatoes, tomatoes, squash, radicchio, cotton and dairy products (from cows injected with genetically modified recombinant bovine growth hormone, rBGH).

Calgene's FlavrSavr tomato, genetically engineered to be shipped long distances, has been withdrawn from the market due to poor sales. Monsanto's Roundup Ready soybean, however, is now in widespread use. Many common soy-derived ingredients, (many found in supplements and vitamins) including lecithin, soy protein isolates, soy isoflavone concentrate, beta-carotene and vitamin E, contain GMO soybeans. Consumer demand can help push labeling of these products to the forefront of the GMO debate.

### **Potential Harmful Effects from GMOs**

GMO foods could have a number of harmful health implications for people who consume them. Currently, genetically engineered foods are not labeled or tested, putting consumers at the risk of unlabeled allergens in the food supply. A study by scientists at the University of Nebraska found that GMO soybeans modified to contain Brazil nut proteins caused reactions in people allergic to Brazil nuts.

Since an "antibiotic resistance gene" is used in many GMOs, genetically engineered foods could also promote antibiotic resistance. This is a concern for farmers as well as consumers. Many organic farmers use the bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) as a natural pesticide to combat insects without using synthetic chemicals. In time they will become immune to it. Bt crops have also been shown to be harmful to beneficial insects. Organic farmers could lose an irreplaceable agricultural tool.

Other possible problems could result from genetically engineered crops, including the creation of new plant toxins, concentration of toxic metals, development of new or more dangerous viruses, and changes in herbicide use patterns that could threaten wildlife and the environment.

### **Resources**

#### **Campaign for Food Safety/ Organic Consumers Association**

860 Highway 61  
Little Marais, MN 55614  
218-226-4164  
e-mail: [alliance@mr.net](mailto:alliance@mr.net)  
<http://www.purefood.org>

#### **The Campaign to Label Genetically Engineered Foods**

6920 Roosevelt Way NE #277  
Seattle, WA 98115  
425-771-4049  
e-mail: [label@thecampaign.org](mailto:label@thecampaign.org)  
<http://www.thecampaign.org>

#### **Consumers Choice Council**

2000 P Street NW, Suite 308  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-785-1950  
e-mail: [consumer@ibm.net](mailto:consumer@ibm.net)  
<http://www.consumercouncil.org>

#### **Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy**

2105 1st Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-870-3417  
e-mail: [gflora@iatp.org](mailto:gflora@iatp.org)

#### **Union of Concerned Scientists**

Two Brattle Square  
Cambridge, MA 02238-9105  
617-547-5552  
e-mail: [ucs@ucsusa.org](mailto:ucs@ucsusa.org)  
<http://www.ucsusa.org/agriculture/index.html>