

Contact: Martin Dagoberto, masscritical.gmos@gmail.com, 508.361.0136



MA RIGHT TO KNOW GMOs
ASKS YOU TO SUPPORT LABELING OF
GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS (GMOs)
www.MARighttoknow.org

What are GMOs? GMOs, or “genetically modified organisms,” are plants or animals created through the gene splicing techniques of biotechnology (also called genetic engineering, or GE). This experimental technology merges DNA from different species, creating unstable combinations of plant, animal, bacterial and viral genes that cannot occur in nature or in traditional crossbreeding.

Virtually all commercial GMOs are engineered to withstand direct application of herbicide and/or to produce an insecticide. Despite biotech industry promises, none of the GMO traits currently on the market offer increased yield, drought tolerance, enhanced nutrition, or any other consumer benefit. The following crops are being genetically engineered for human consumption: corn, soybeans, canola, cottonseed, sugar beets, Hawaiian papaya, and small amounts of zucchini and yellow squash. In addition GMO alfalfa, corn and soy are being fed to livestock. It is estimated that GMOs are in at least 80% of the processed food in America.

Are GMOs labeled? Unfortunately, even though polls consistently show that a significant majority of Americans want to know if the food they’re purchasing contains GMOs, the powerful biotech lobby has succeeded in keeping this information from the public. In California over 6 million voters (48.5%) voted in favor of Prop 37, a ballot initiative to mandate the labeling of GMOS, despite \$45.6 million spent to defeat it. A 2008 CBS News Poll found that 87% of consumers wanted GMOs labeled. And, according to a CBS/New York Times poll, 53% of consumers said they would not buy food that has been genetically modified.

Are GMOs safe? A growing body of scientific, medical, and anecdotal evidence connects GMOs with health problems, environmental damage, and violation of farmers’ and consumers’ rights. Most developed nations do not consider GMOs to be safe. In over 62 countries around the world, including Australia, Japan, and all of the countries in the European Union, GMOs are either labeled or outright banned. In the U.S., the government has approved GMOs based on studies conducted by the same corporations that created them and profit from their sale. There are no government mandated controlled studies demonstrating the short term or long term safety of GMOs. In addition, it is very difficult to conduct any independent studies of GMOs because the seeds are patented and therefore unavailable for testing. GMOs are unregulated. The FDA’s head of food policy previously worked as Monsanto’s vice president and attorney. Increasingly, as Americans become educated to the risks, they are asking for the right to know if GMOs are in their food so they can choose for themselves whether to eat GMOs or not.

What are the health risks associated with GMOs? The American Academy of Environmental Medicine urges physicians to advise all patients to avoid GMOS and indicates that several animal studies indicate serious health risks, including infertility, immune problems including allergies, accelerated aging, faulty insulin regulation, gastrointestinal disease, and cancer.

What are the impacts of GMOs on the environment? Over 80% of all GMOs grown worldwide are engineered for herbicide tolerance. As a result, use of toxic herbicides like Roundup has increased 15 times since GMOs were introduced. GMO crops are also responsible for the emergence of “super weeds” and “super bugs:” which can only be killed with ever more toxic poisons like 2,4-D (a major ingredient in Agent Orange). GMOs are a direct extension of chemical agriculture, and are developed and sold by the world’s biggest chemical companies. The long-term impacts of GMOs are unknown, and once released into the environment these novel organisms cannot be recalled.

How do GMOs affect farmers? Because GMOs are novel life forms, biotechnology companies have been able to obtain patents with which to restrict their use. As a result, the companies that make GMOs now have the power to sue farmers whose fields are contaminated with GMOs, even when it is the result of inevitable drift from neighboring fields. GMOs therefore pose a serious threat to farmer sovereignty and to the national food security of any country where they are grown, including the United States.

How can I learn more? For more information please visit <http://righttoknow-gmo.org> Suggested documentaries include: [Genetic Roulette: The Gamble of Our Lives](#) by Jeffrey Smith and [Seeds of Death](#) by Gary Null. Suggested books include [Altered Genes, Twisted Truth](#) by Steven Druker and [Seeds of Deception](#) and [Genetic Roulette](#) by Jeffrey Smith