

Is Genetically Engineered Food Safe?

Stop the Risky Use of Genetic Engineering

An Action by Green Sangha

What is Genetic Engineering?

Genetic Engineering (GE) is a modern form of biotechnology. This relatively new and rapidly developing technology is raising public concern because it fundamentally *alters nature* by crossing natural species barriers. The manipulation of genetic material (DNA) inside the cells of living organisms to block or add desired traits is often termed a “genetically modified organism”, abbreviated as GMO.

What are the dangers of Genetically Engineered food?

- Genetically engineered crops can disrupt the ecosystem by reducing bio-diversity and soil fertility and inducing the development of new pathogens.
- Genetic material from engineered crops will spread in nature (genetic drift) to affect other plants (including organic crops) and animals; pollen from GM corn can be carried up to eight miles by the wind, infecting other corn varieties; perhaps even further by pollinators like bees.
- Scientists have found Monarch butterflies dying after eating milkweed that was exposed to genetically modified corn pollen.
- Herbicide-resistant GE crops pose the risk of “superweeds” and thus increased toxic herbicide use.
- It is impossible to “recall” GE foods back from nature.
- Without labeling regulations, the consumer won’t know whether he/she is eating a GE food containing allergens.
- With little or no regulatory restraints or scientific protocol, neither scientists, corporations, or the public can predict what the long-term and irreversible effects will be of the release of GMO’s into our environment.

Why do we need to inform people?

- Today, about 70% of processed foods contain genetically modified ingredients.
- As the American Public, we should demand labeling of GE foods so we can consciously choose the food we eat. Currently, we have no way of knowing whether it has been genetically engineered.
- Most Americans are relatively uninformed about genetically engineered foods, while citizens in Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand have protested to such a degree that there is almost *no market* in these countries for genetically engineered foods.

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What can I do?

- **Buy organic (check food labels)**
By purchasing organic foods, you can avoid GE foods and support organic farmers. By doing this you are also helping to protect the air, the land, the water and all life that depends on it.
- **Call the “Frankenfood Fifteen” Corporations**
Call the corporations that are using GE ingredients and tell them that you will not purchase their products unless they can assure you (in writing) that they are GE-free (see www.purefood.org). Consumer pressure *can* help. Many companies, like Frito-Lay and McDonalds, have taken steps to eliminate *some* GE ingredients.
- **Create or sign a petition**
Create or sign a petition and mail it to your elected officials telling them that you wish to see both labeling and comprehensive testing of all GE food products.
- **Write or call your elected officials**
One of our fellow activist friends spoke to Senator Barbara Boxer in Longs during the holidays and asked her what we should do regarding this issue (Senator Boxer has taken a courageous lead on this issue). She said that she and other legislators **MUST** continue hearing from the public.
- **Organize your household, talk to your friends**
Food is one of the most fundamentally important parts of our lives. Share this information with your family and friends. It is vital that we educate each other on this issue. It is because of the vast ignorance of the people of this country that the biotech corporations can proceed with GE. They are effectively conducting a massive, irreversible experiment without regard for the precautionary principle. We are all acting as the guinea pigs.
- **Visit websites of organizations that are fighting GE foods (visit the biotech sites too!).**
This issue is complex because it involves issues that range from globalization to the pollen we breathe, from the food we ingest to the future of our redwood forests and our endangered fisheries. Read and get more informed on this issue.

For more information on GE foods visit:

www.purefood.org

www.truefoodnow.org

www.globalexchange.org/gmo

www.thecampaign.org