

CONSUMER ALERT

Genetically Modified Foods and Health Risks

Genetic Modification or Genetic Engineering extracts genes bearing a specific, hereditary trait from one organism (animals, plants, bacteria) and artificially inserts them into a completely different organism (e.g. food crops).

Currently, crops such as corn, soyabean, potatoes, and tomatoes are the main crops being grown from genetic engineering.

How can consumers identify GM foods and how can you avoid them?

In the absence of labelling, it is very difficult. According to Greenpeace, GM soya is present in about 60 percent of all soy derivatives including vegetable oils, soy flour, lecithin, and soy protein. GM corn can be found in 50 percent of all corn products and foods. made from corn, such as cornstarch, cornflakes



Tomatoes are among the foods being genetically modified.

The main causes for concern to human health from Genetically Modified Foods (GMF) are adverse allergic reactions, build-up of resistance to antibiotics and the potential for new, or more toxins in foods.

Food allergies

Genetic Modification can transfer allergies from foods people know cause allergies to foods they think are safe. Failure to label Genetically Modified Foods means that people with allergies have no way of knowing whether they are eating potentially risky foods, or in the event of Genetically Modified Foods and Health Risks

problems, what ingredient provoked the reaction.

Antibiotic Resistance

The British Medical Association has called attention to the risk to human health from antibiotic resistance developing in micro-organisms, and that this will be a major threat in the future.

Also, although the use of antibiotic resistance genes as markers is being phased out, they are present in many GM foods and can increase resistance to antibiotics, making disease harder to control.

Toxic Effects

Genetic manipulation can increase levels of natural plant toxins in foods or create new toxins in unexpected ways.

(Source: consumers International)

Contact us at: (876) 926-1650-2 (Head Office) or (876) 940-6154 (Montego Bay Office)

Our Food, Whose Choice?
... Consumers Take Action!

KEEPING CONSUMERS INFORMED

BOTH SIDES OF THE GM DEBATE

Those against GM foods say....

1. GM foods contain genes from totally different species, e.g. fish genes in tomatoes for longer 'shelf life'.
2. GM foods may endanger health. There has been no research into the long-term effects of eating such foods.
3. GM foods are unnecessary. Countries with food shortages cannot benefit, as farmers will not be able to afford the new seeds, which are under monopoly control of huge multinational companies.
4. GM foods deny consumer choice. They are not properly labelled so that we may know if our foods contain GMOs (genetically modified organisms).
5. GMOs can spread into other crops. Pollen from GM crops can spread modified genes into other crops and weeds.
6. GM foods are a threat to wildlife. They are designed to be resistant to herbicides & pesticides (made by the companies that developed GM foods) so farmers use more sprays to eliminate weeds and pests.
7. GM foods are bad for farmers. They can lead to more intensive farming, forcing more small farmers out of business.

Those in support of GM foods say...

There are benefits to expect in the future:

1. Foods with a higher content of vitamins, minerals, or protein.
2. Fruits and vegetables which stay fresh longer.
3. Crops resistant to insect attack which don't require spraying.
4. Hardier crops that are drought or frost tolerant and better adapted to difficult growing conditions
5. Eliminating allergy causing problems from foods such as peanuts and rice
6. Healthier cooking oils from soy, canola and plants to reduce saturated fat content
7. Low fat chips which absorb less oil.
8. Quicker diagnosis of diseases in plants.
9. Foods better suited to the nutritional needs of both humans and animals.