

Contamination of GM-free food

Consumers have a right to choice and this right will be jeopardised unless governments develop strong measures to prevent contamination of GM-free food.

How contamination occurs

GM pollen can blow into fields of GM-free crops or insects can carry it. Contamination of GM-free crops can also happen during processing of seeds or in transportation.

In countries where governments plan to grow GM crops strict co-existence measures, allowing for GM-free zones, need to be established.

GM-free food must not become a luxury

In most countries GM-free producers pay the costs of GMO contamination. Instead polluters must be made liable for GMO contamination of GM-free fields and crops. GM-free food must not become a luxury good, but must remain widely available to all consumers.



*It's your food
take action!*

**As a consumer there is a
lot you can do to defend
your rights**

Write to your local grocer or supermarket and ask them to offer GM-free food. Or go to the shop and ask to speak to the manager.

Tell your government to introduce strict co-existence rules to prevent contamination of GM-free crops, and to allow GM-free zones to be established.

Ask your government to make polluters pay for the costs of GMO contamination. Tell them to sign and enact the Biosafety Protocol.

Consumers International (CI) defends the rights of all consumers, particularly the poor and marginalised, through empowering national consumer groups and campaigning at the international level. CI represents over 250 organisations in 115 countries.

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Genetically modified organisms

what's at stake?



www.consumersinternational.org/gm



Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) may pose a risk to human and animal health.

Consumers international (CI) is campaigning for GMOs to be independently safety tested and for a rigorous approval process.

GMOs can contaminate GM-free crops and food.

CI is campaigning for strict rules to make sure GM-free food remains widely available to all consumers.

Many consumers are unaware they are eating GM food. CI is campaigning for all GM food to be labelled.

Consumers have rights!

If GMOs are not properly regulated their use threatens consumer rights to:

CHOICE

INFORMATION

SAFETY

A SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT.

What is genetic modification?

Genetic modification (GM) is a major change in food production; Genes are transferred between unrelated species, for example from animals to plants. This technology makes it possible to break species boundaries set up over millions of years. GM is a major change from existing conventional plant breeding techniques.

GM crops are developed by corporate interests and promoted aggressively by biotech companies. GM crops are not the miracle these corporations claim they are. So far, consumers and smallholder farmers have not seen benefits from GMOs, although there may be some in the future.



Don't be fooled

<http://itiki.oneworld.net/penguin/genetics/GEhome.html>

Informed choice

We want to see the label!

Consumers have a right to information. Surveys in many countries show that the majority of consumers are concerned about GMOs. Labels provide information that enables consumers to make a choice, whether based on safety or other concerns.

More than 40 countries have some form of mandatory GM labelling. However, the three principal GMO producing countries (USA, Argentina and Canada) do not have labelling of GM food. The majority of Americans surveyed by Rutgers were unaware that GM food is sold in their supermarkets.

It is important that all GMOs, and products made from GMOs, are labelled. There must also be proper documentation and bulk labelling (eg on sacks of food) to ensure that GMOs can be traced through the food chain.



It's your food take action!

As a consumer there is a lot you can do to defend your rights

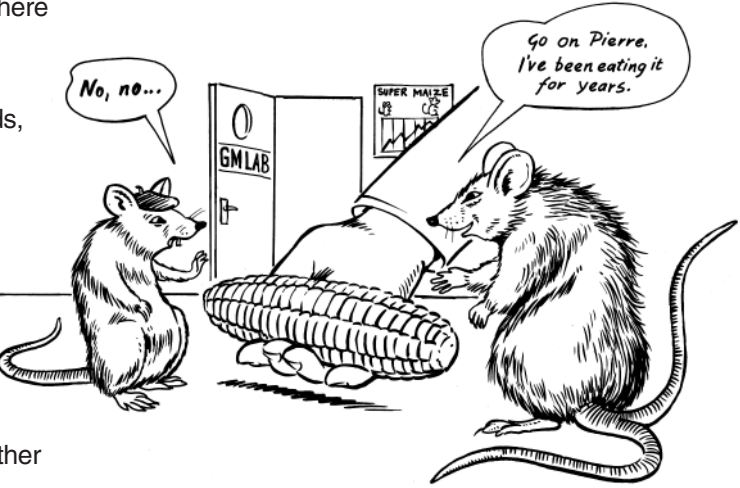
Demand that your government makes sure all GMOs are labelled. Tell them to introduce and implement labelling legislation for all foods containing, consisting of or derived from GMOs.

Ask your government to support an international guideline on GM labelling allowing all countries to label GM food.

Is GM food safe to eat?

Consumers have a right to safety. However, there is not enough data about effects of GMOs on human and animal health. GMOs need to be safety tested to the highest scientific standards, and subject to a rigorous approval process.

Biotech corporations do some safety testing of GM foods but this is not a good enough guarantee for consumers. Monsanto (a biotech corporation) hid scientific findings showing that rats fed on GM corn (MON863) had abnormalities. Monsanto should have made these results public for further scientific testing and scrutiny.



Consumers must not be guinea pigs

GMOs should not be sold on the market until they are officially approved, and independently tested by scientists whose responsibility is to the general public and not to the biotech corporation.

It's your food take action!

As a consumer there is a lot you can do to defend your rights

Tell your government that GMOs must be tested to the highest scientific standards before they are sold on the market.

If your government does not have an official approval process, demand that they establish a rigorous process to assess the safety of all GMOs.

If your government is testing GM crops tell them they must test crops in an enclosed environment so the seeds or pollen don't contaminate GM-free crops.