Fear Itself: The Case For The Safe And Accurate Food Labeling Act

By Eric Meinerding

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Fear Itself: The Case For The Safe And Accurate Food Labeling Act

Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt once said we have nothing to fear but fear itself. Due to increasing fear and hysteria against Genetically Modified Foods or “GMOs” state governments like Vermont have begun to require mandatory labeling without any scientific support. To better protect the American consumer, my partner and I stand Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its agriculture and/or food safety policy in the United States.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

**Policy**: “a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2016* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy))  
  
**Substantial**: “large in amount, size or number” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2016* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantially)*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantially))

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the structure of the Status Quo. We offer two facts

Fact 1: Labeling Laws.

Vermont enacted the first state law mandating GMO food labeling

State Senator Judy Schwank 2016. (State Senator for the 11th District in the Pennsylvania State Senate, and is minority chairwomen of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee). “Opinion: Congress needs to level the field on GMO labeling.” July 8th, 2016. <http://www.readingeagle.com/berks-country/article/opinion-congress-needs-to-level-the-field-on-gmo-labeling>

The state of Vermont, in reaction to public desire for GMO labeling on foods, passed a law requiring such labeling and it will impact farmers, food processors and consumers nationwide. Vermont's mandatory GMO labeling law takes effect on July 1 and will alter the way food companies do business if they want to sell their products in Vermont. Unless the U.S. Senate acts in the coming weeks to pre-empt Vermont's law with a national uniform labeling solution, the law of a small state of 600,000 residents will become the de facto law of the land.

Fact 2. Coming Complexity.

More states will follow by enacting a patchwork of labeling requirements, making food sales extremely complex

Produce Marketing Association 2016 ( trade organization representing companies from every segment of the global fresh produce and floral supply chain) 30 Mar 2016 “GMO LABELING: STATE-BY-STATE PATCHWORK VS. NATIONAL STANDARD” <http://www.pma.com/content/articles/2016/03/gmo-labeling-state-by-state-patchwork-vs-national-standard>

The genetically modified organism (GMO) labeling issue has created a tremendous sense of urgency in the U.S. Congress as a complicated patchwork of state labeling laws looms in the near future. Such a patchwork would make produce marketing, indeed marketing of any GMO products, extremely complex. Products rarely are marketed in a single state, so suppliers would be faced with challenging and expensive labeling decisions. In addition, retail grocery chains often operate across state lines, making their labeling efforts equally difficult.

OBSERVATION 3. The PLAN, to be implemented by the Congress and the President

1. Congress passes HR1599, the Safe and Accurate Food Labelling Act of 2015.
2. The act will be implemented immediately upon an affirmative ballot and take effect according to sections 115, 203, and 304 of the act.
3. Enforcement through the FDA, the USDA and any other necessary means. Violators subject to the same penalties as for similar crimes under existing law.
4. Funding through existing budgets of existing agencies, no increase needed.
5. Affirmative speeches may clarify as needed.

OBSERVATION 4. JUSTIFICATIONS

JUSTIFICATION 1. Rational Regulation

A. Clear standards. The Safe & Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015 removes any dangerous GMOs from the market and requires labeling only when the characteristics of the food have been altered

Govtrack.us 2015 <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr1599/summary>

The SAFE Act: “The Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015 would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate the distribution and labeling related to bioengineered foods (often referred to as genetically modified foods or GMOs). It would require food producers to notify FDA of any bioengineered foods intended to be sold interstate and would disallow the sale any bioengineered foods not deemed safe by FDA. Although the bill would prevent FDA from requiring the labeling of bioengineered foods only on the grounds that the foods are bioengineered, FDA could require that alterations of nutritional properties, allergens, or other characteristics of food be listed on food labeling. Regulations would also prohibit the labeling of food as not bioengineered if it had been planted with bioengineered seeds. Dairy products from animals fed bioengineered foods and foods developed using bioengineered processing aids or enzymes could still be labelled as non-bioengineered. The bill would also prevent states from issuing their own food labeling requirements for bioengineered foods.”

B. Complexity solved. The Safe & Accurate Food Labeling Act solves the confusing patchwork of state labeling laws

John Bode 2015 (President & CEO of the Corn Refiners Association) Corn Refiners Association Press Release “CRA Applauds Introduction of Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act“ <http://corn.org/foodlabelingact/>

“We strongly support the efforts of Representatives Pompeo and Butterfield as they seek to strengthen and unify our food labeling laws by protecting consumers and reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens,” said John Bode, President and CEO of the Corn Refiners Association. “Today, food and beverage manufacturers face the potential of an unwieldy patchwork of mandatory state labeling laws that contribute to higher food prices, harm interstate commerce, and increase consumer confusion.  The Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act will ensure labeling decisions are established by science-based, uniform standards that are consistent in every grocery store in all 50 states. We encourage Congress to pass this bill as soon as possible.”

JUSTIFICATION 2. Foolish Fears block Global Gains. We see this in 2 sub-points

A. Scientific denialism. Mandatory GMO labels are based on unfounded fears and threaten global food security.

Ian Kullgren 2016. (POLITICO Pro Agriculture reporter) “Hamburg worries about mandatory GMO labeling.” June 6th, 2016. <http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-agriculture/2016/06/hamburg-worries-about-mandatory-gmo-labeling-214661>

Those opposed to mandatory GMO labeling got some welcome words from a former top Obama administration official on Friday. Former FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg said she is concerned it could send the wrong message to consumers. “This is the area that worries me the most, that we not enter a period of what some call science denialism out of fear,” Hamburg said at the O’Neill Institute’s Vote Food 2016 event at Georgetown Law Center, during a conversation about science in food policy. Hamburg said the positives for GMO crops, in particular, are “very compelling especially if we care about food security around the globe.”

B. The Impact: Global standard of living. GMO regulatory uncertainty blocks needed progress on feeding humanity and improving global standards of living

Dr. David Zilberman 2014. (PhD, Agricultural Resources Economics Department, Univ of California) “GMOs and Global Food Security” December 18th, 2014. <https://www.geneticliteracyproject.org/2014/12/18/gmos-and-global-food-security/>

Genetically Modified (GM) foods and crops are a key tool in helping to address the challenge of feeding a growing and more prosperous population, and improving the global standard of living today and for future generations. The high costs and uncertainty about the regulation of GMOs have slowed the rate of innovation of new traits and prevented startups and major companies from developing many second-generation varieties that could improve our well-being, enhance environmental sustainability and make a major contribution to addressing the challenges of climate change.

JUSTIFICATION 3. Consumer Cost.

State-mandated labeling requirements increase costs for American families by $500/year

Thomas A Hemphill and Syagnik Banerjee 2015 (Hemphill is a professor of strategy, innovation and public policy at the School of Management University of Michigan-Flint. Banerjee is an associate professor of mobile and interactive marketing at the school of management). September 2nd, 2015. “Genetically Modified Organisms and the U.S. Retail Food Labeling Controversy: Consumer Perceptions, Regulation, and Public Policy.” [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/basr.12062/full](file:///C:/Users/coustomer/Downloads/article%20request.pdf)

Labeling requirements (including specific individual state-mandated GMO percentage thresholds) of GMO processed foods would impose a cost on all consumers—including those not desiring such information. The existing U.S. food system infrastructure, that is, involving separate planting, storage, processing/packaging, and transportation, is inadequate to accommodate this segregation of GMO and non-GMO products and meet the legislative requirements of high non-GMO purity standards, thus requiring significant capital investment on the part of the GMO food processing industry and increased costs to the consumer (Byrne 2010; Sexton 2012; Washington State Academy of Sciences 2013). A study undertaken at Cornell University revealed that New York’s proposed mandatory GMO labeling bill would cost New York State families an average of $500 per year, echoing similar increases in the cost of food for consumers found in earlier studies undertaken in both Washington State and California (Grocery Manufacturers Association 2014b).

JUSTIFICATION 4. Minimized Markets.

Mandatory GMO labels decrease consumer choice

The Editors of Scientific American 2013. (Scientific American, the longest continuously published magazine in the U.S. ) “Labels for GMO Foods Are a Bad Idea” September 1st, 2013. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/labels-for-gmo-foods-are-a-bad-idea/>

Many people argue for GMO labels in the name of increased consumer choice. On the contrary, such labels have limited people's options. In 1997, a time of growing opposition to GMOs in Europe, the E.U. began to require them. By 1999, to avoid labels that might drive customers away, most major European retailers had removed genetically modified ingredients from products bearing their brand. Major food producers such as Nestlé followed suit. Today it is virtually impossible to find GMOs in European supermarkets.

JUSTIFICATION 5. Accurate Assurance. We see this in 2 sub-points

A. Safety approval. The SAFE act will assure safety approval and eliminate confusion

State Senator Judy Schwank 2016. (State Senator for the 11th District in the Pennsylvania State Senate, and is minority chairwomen of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee). “Opinion: Congress needs to level the field on GMO labeling.” July 8th, 2016. <http://www.readingeagle.com/berks-country/article/opinion-congress-needs-to-level-the-field-on-gmo-labeling>

A proposal before the U.S. Senate, the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015, which was introduced this session and passed the House of Representatives on July 24, could be the necessary legislation that accomplishes this at the federal level. Requiring FDA approval of GMOs prior to their entry into the food market, as well as providing the ability to mandate labeling when necessary, would eliminate the confusion caused by a variety of state laws. At the same time consumers would be completely assured of the origin of their food.

B. GMO-free foods assured. Consumers will have uniform, accurate information about GMO-free foods

National Association of Wheat Growers 2015. (trade association for producers of wheat) “NAWG Applauds Introduction of the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act“ 25 Mar 2015 <http://www.wheatworld.org/news-events/2015/03/nawg-applauds-introduction-of-the-safe-and-accurate-food-labeling-act/>

“We are pleased by the introduction of this bipartisan legislation. A uniform standard will bring the clarity desired by the consumer while ensuring they have direct access to fact-based, accurate information about how their food is grown, which is just not possible through conflicting state-by-state labeling laws,” said Brett Blankenship, NAWG President and wheat grower from Washtucna, Wash. “It is imperative that Congress pass this legislation this year to help consumers who are looking for more clarity in labeling.” The legislation, which will ensure that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) remains the authority on food safety and labeling standards in the United States, was introduced by a bipartisan group of lawmakers led by Rep.Mike Pompeo, (R-KS), and Rep. G.K Butterfield (D-NC). Currently, a growing patchwork of mandatory state labeling laws threatens to harm interstate commerce, drive up the price of food and increase consumer confusion.  The Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act will ensure labeling decisions are established by science-based, uniform standards that are consistent in every grocery store in all 50 states. GMOs have been proven safe by nearly 2,000 studies from the leading scientific bodies in the world, including the World Health Organization and the American Medical Association. The legislation sets uniform rules for foods carrying a GMO-Free label through a national certification program for foods that have been produced without bioengineering.

2A EVIDENCE: SAFE AND ACCURATE FOOD LABELING ACT

DEFINITIONS & BACKGROUND

Full Text of Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015 [be sure to print out and bring with you to the round]

[*https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1599/text*](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1599/text)

Genetically Engineered Plant

From the text of the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1599/text#toc-HE36551FBCF5A44EFA5572B04478A82A9>

Genetically Engineered Plant: “(3) The term ‘genetically engineered plant’ refers to a plant or plant product (as those terms are defined in section 403 of the Plant Protection Act ([7 U.S.C. 7702](http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=7&section=7702))), if— “(A) it contains genetic material that has been modified through in vitro recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) techniques; and “(B) the modification could not otherwise be obtained using conventional breeding techniques.”

INHERENCY

Mandatory labeling legislation under consideration in multiple states

The Editors of Scientific American 2013. (Scientific American, the longest continuously published magazine in the U.S. ) “Labels for GMO Foods Are a Bad Idea” September 1st, 2013. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/labels-for-gmo-foods-are-a-bad-idea/>

At press time, GMO-label legislation is pending in at least 20 states. Such debates are about so much more than slapping ostensibly simple labels on our food to satisfy a segment of American consumers. Ultimately, we are deciding whether we will continue to develop an immensely beneficial technology or shun it based on unfounded fears.

Why didn’t it already get passed by Congress? The House passed it, but the Senate version of the same bill was defeated in March 2016

Brian Barth 2016 (journalist) “GMO Labeling Legislation: Modern Farmer’s Guide to the Mayhem” 1 Apr 2016 MODERN FARMER <http://modernfarmer.com/2016/04/gmo-labeling/>

US Senate bill [S.2609](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2609) was [defeated](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/17/business/bill-to-stop-states-requiring-labeling-of-gmo-foods-fails.html?_r=3http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/17/business/bill-to-stop-states-requiring-labeling-of-gmo-foods-fails.html?_r=2) by a vote of 48-49 (60 votes were required for passage). The legislation, spearheaded by Republican senator Pat Roberts of Kansas, would have set up a voluntary federal labeling program for genetically engineered ingredients. The bill was backed by the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), a trade organization representing the nation’s largest food companies, as well as biotechnology companies like Monsanto, Syngenta, and DuPont.

**END QUOTE. Barth goes on later in the same context to say QUOTE:**

H.R. 1599 was passed by a large majority last summer, but required Senate approval to be implemented—which has now been denied. The bill included a provision to block states from enacting their own GMO labeling laws, as were recently passed in Vermont, Maine, and Connecticut and are currently pending in 31 other states.

Changing the law in one state will affect the entire country

Justin Posey 2016 (Communications Manager at The Heritage Foundation) “Mandatory GMO Labeling Laws “Coercive, Unfounded and Misleading.” June 8th, 2016. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/mandatory-gmo-labeling-laws-coercive-unfounded-and-misleading>

[Vermont’s genetically modified organism (GMO) mandatory labeling law](http://www.wsj.com/articles/gmo-labeling-law-roils-food-companies-1458510332) goes into effect on July 1.  Many in the food industry argue that they will need to label all food sold nationally based on the Vermont standard because they wouldn’t choose to have multiple labels simultaneously.

Patchwork Policy: Allowing States to individually regulate GMO’s creates confusion in the food industry.

Thomas A Hemphill and Syagnik Banerjee 2015 (Hemphill is a professor of strategy, innovation and public policy at the School of Management University of Michigan-Flint. Banerjee is an associate professor of mobile and interactive marketing at the school of management). September 2nd, 2015. “Genetically Modified Organisms and the U.S. Retail Food Labeling Controversy: Consumer Perceptions, Regulation, and Public Policy.” [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/basr.12062/full](file:///C:/Users/coustomer/Downloads/article%20request.pdf)

The existing interest group lobbying efforts at enacting mandatory GMO retail food labeling legislation at the state level has had limited success, with the State of Vermont’s recent law being a “breakthrough” for anti-GMO advocates. Yet, State level mandatory GMO retail food labeling legislation is problematic, entailing potential nightmarish industry regulatory compliance by the food and agricultural industry. “We should not be making food safety labeling decisions through a patchwork of state laws,” said Louis Finkel, vice president of government affairs for the Grocery Manufacturers Association (Reuters 2014). As diverse regulatory requirements of state legislation are enacted, the food and agricultural industry will need to constantly re-adjust their labeling and business operating practices. For example, “non-purity” thresholds for GMO “contamination” of so-called non-GMO retail foods could differ from state-to state, requiring multiple labeling requirements, improved crop separation operations, and different certification standards. At this public policy juncture, what is a recommended industry nonmarket strategy for the pro-GMO food industry

JUSTIFICATIONS

Rational Regulation

How Food is Made is irrelevant to labeling

Bruce Pardy JD 2016. (Professor of Law at Queen’s University in Ontario Canada). “Not Good or Bad but Different: Free Markets, Subjective Preferences, and Labels for Genetically Modified Foods.”[Brackets in Original] April 19th, 2016. <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2767067>

Labels identify what food consists of rather than how it was produced. ‘‘[L]abels only need to accurately describe the attributes of what is in the food itself, not the process by which the food was grown or made.” Labels identify the coffee inside the bag but not the wages of the workers who picked the beans. This distinction makes sense. The coffee inside the bag is the thing itself, the subject of the contract between buyer and seller. The wages of the workers who picked the beans are collateral to the nature of the coffee. No doubt some consumers would like to know if the workers were paid a reasonable wage, but that fact does not change the nature of the coffee itself. Mandatory labeling of an infinite array of collateral matters that do not relate to the nature of the food is not appropriate. Such information may be voluntarily supplied by manufacturers if they believe it would make products more attractive to consumers.

State laws are confusing: Example from Vermont

State Senator Judy Schwank 2016. (State Senator for the 11th District in the Pennsylvania State Senate, and is minority chairwomen of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee). “Opinion: Congress needs to level the field on GMO labeling.” July 8th, 2016. <http://www.readingeagle.com/berks-country/article/opinion-congress-needs-to-level-the-field-on-gmo-labeling>

For food companies facing the prospects of having to re-label their food, there are numerous complexities and carve-outs in the Vermont law. Certain items, such as dairy and products containing meat, are exempt from the labeling requirement. Vegetable soup, for example, would need to be labeled, but vegetable soup with beef would not, creating further confusion for both companies and consumers.

State labels are coercive, unfounded, and misleading

Justin Posey quoting Daren Bakst 2016 (Pose is the Communications Manager at The Heritage Foundation. Baskt is an agricultural policy expert at The Heritage Foundation) “Mandatory GMO Labeling Laws “Coercive, Unfounded and Misleading.” June 8th, 2016. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/mandatory-gmo-labeling-laws-coercive-unfounded-and-misleading>

The biggest issue, he argues, is that the labeling requirements are “coercive, unfounded and misleading.” “No government, federal, state or local, should compel companies to engage in speech that gives the false impression that there’s something wrong with genetically engineered food.  It misleads consumers and legitimizes bad science.”

Global Food Security

Mandatory labeling hurts genetic engineering, needed to solve global nutrition challenges

Daren Bakst 2016 (quoted by Justin Pose, Communications Manager at The Heritage Foundation. Baskt is an agricultural policy expert at The Heritage Foundation) “Mandatory GMO Labeling Laws “Coercive, Unfounded and Misleading.” June 8th, 2016. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/06/mandatory-gmo-labeling-laws-coercive-unfounded-and-misleading>

“Mandatory labeling would likely have a negative effect on genetic engineering, which has so much potential to solve many agricultural and nutrition challenges around the world,” Bakst said. “It also would likely hurt agriculture; about half of U.S. cropland (169 million acres) was used to grow genetically engineered corn, cotton, and soybeans in 2013.”

Food insecurity drives instability, social unrest, extremism and conflict

Dr Tammy Beckham 2015 (DVM, Ph.D., Dean of the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine) testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture 4 Nov 2015  
<http://agriculture.house.gov/uploadedfiles/11.4.15_beckham_testimony.pdf>

Meeting these growing demands will be critical if we hope to maintain political stability in increasingly volatile regions across the globe. Food insecurity and scarcity is well known to be one of the most potent drivers of political instability and social unrest. In fact, according to the Lugar Center, “global food security has both foreign policy and national security implications for the U.S. Diplomatic efforts to maintain peace and stability are much more difficult whenever there are food shortages contributing to extremism and conflict”. Perfect examples of this have been seen throughout the Middle East and North Africa, where countries import over half  
of their food.

US Agriculture key to Global Food Security and global food security key to securing the homeland

Dr Tammy Beckham 2015 (DVM, Ph.D., Dean of the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine) testimony before the House Committee on Agriculture 4 Nov 2015   
<http://agriculture.house.gov/uploadedfiles/11.4.15_beckham_testimony.pdf>

In addition to understanding the importance of the agricultural industry in the U.S. and its role in supporting national security, it is also important and critical that we understand the role of global food security in securing the homeland. Currently, 870 million people around the world do not have access to safe and nutritious food in a sufficient supply. By the year 2050, the global population is expected to exceed 9 billion people. Nearly all of the growth is expected to occur in developing countries. Feeding 9 billion people will demand that food production is increased by 70% and more specifically, that food production in the developing world double.

Mandatory Labeling increases unfounded fear of GMOs and hurts the poor in Africa

Boston Globe Editorial 2016. “GMO Labeling Laws Promote Fear and Misinformation.” March 29th, 2016. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2016/03/28/gmo-labeling-laws-promote-fear-misinformation/CAv0kpm72mh10huRGyFnPI/story.html>

Those labels, carrying the implicit and misleading suggestion that GMOs are different from other foods, are a bad idea for many reasons — but especially because they will contribute to already widespread confusion. A Pew Research survey [revealed](http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/07/01/chapter-6-public-opinion-about-food/) that nearly 60 percent of adults believe that GMO foods are less safe than conventional foods, despite m[any studies to the contrary.](https://www.sciencenews.org/article/gmos-haven%E2%80%99t-delivered-their-promises-%E2%80%94-or-risks)The campaign against GMOs in wealthy Western countries also threatens a technology that can lift populations out of malnutrition and can have a financial impact in impoverished communities that subsist on farming. For example, genetically modified rice and superbananas designed to include a high amount of beta carotene would boost vitamin A levels in children. Feeding them to hundreds of thousands of children in Africa, where vitamin A deficiency is a huge public health issue, would help prevent childhood blindness. Yet the potential of these superfoods [has not been realized](http://brucealberts.ucsf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BAScienceEditorial09.20.13StandingUpForGMOs.pdf). Their commercialization [has been repeatedly stalled](http://www.wsj.com/articles/anti-gmo-students-bruise-a-superbanana-1457998345) by the relentless demonization of GMOs. It is especially troubling when politicians who rightly chastise climate change deniers flock to the side of ignorance on another issue where lives are also at stake.

GMOs have multiple benefits for increased productivity and reducing world food crisis

David Zilberman 2014. (PhD, Agricultural Resources Economics Department, University of California) “GMOs and Global Food Security” December 18th, 2014. <https://www.geneticliteracyproject.org/2014/12/18/gmos-and-global-food-security/>

• The use of GMOs can ease land and water competition issues and limit greenhouse gas emissions.

• Food security and human well-being will be enhanced if the regulatory environment supports development of second-generation technologies.

• Wise public policy and regulations will encourage scientific advancement and innovation to avoid ongoing food insecurity and food crises as the world population grows.

• Agriculture policy should encourage technologies that help farmers produce food more sustainably, using fewer resources.

Foolish Fears

GMO labels embrace a fear-fueled philosophy

The Editors of Scientific American 2013. (Scientific American, the longest continuously published magazine in the U.S. ) “Labels for GMO Foods Are a Bad Idea” September 1st, 2013. (brackets in original) <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/labels-for-gmo-foods-are-a-bad-idea/>

Instead of providing people with useful information, mandatory GMO labels would only intensify the misconception that so-called Frankenfoods endanger people's health [see “[The Truth about Genetically Modified Food](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=the-truth-about-genetically-modified-food)”]. The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the World Health Organization and the exceptionally vigilant European Union agree that GMOs are just as safe as other foods. Compared with conventional breeding techniques—which swap giant chunks of DNA between one plant and another—genetic engineering is far more precise and, in most cases, is less likely to produce an unexpected result. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has tested all the GMOs on the market to determine whether they are toxic or allergenic. They are not. (The GMO-fearing can seek out “100 Percent Organic” products, indicating that a food contains no genetically modified ingredients, among other requirements.)

National Academy of Sciences study: 400 page report demonstrating the safety of GMO foods

National Academy of Sciences 2016. (The National Academy of Sciences (NASwas established in 1863 by an Act of Congress, signed by President Lincoln, as a private, nongovernmental institution to advise the nation on issues related to science and technology. Members are elected by their peers for outstanding contributions to research.) “Genetically Engineered Crops: Experiences and Prospects” <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/23395/genetically-engineered-crops-experiences-and-prospects>

Prior National Research Council reports have argued that there is no strict dichotomy between genetic engineering and other forms of plant breeding with respect to risk. Recent developments in genome editing and other emerging genetic-engineering technologies make it even more apparent that regulatory approaches that focus on some form of breeding “process” as an indicator of risk are less and less technically defensible. Some emerging genetic-engineering technologies are likely to create new crop varieties that are indistinguishable from those developed with conventional plant breeding, whereas other technologies, such as mutagenesis, that are not covered by existing laws could create new crop varieties with substantial changes to plant phenotypes. The size and extent of the genetic transformation has relatively little relevance to the extent of the change in the plant and consequently to the risk that it poses to the environment or to food safety. The committee recommends the development of a tiered approach to regulation that is based not on the breeding process but on considerations of novelty, potential hazard, and exposure as criteria. The application of -omics technologies can help to provide greater assurance that no unintended differences have been introduced by whatever breeding technique is used.

Details on the National Academy of Sciences study

Andre Pollack 2016. (Writer for the New York Times specializing in Business and Science in the field of Biotechnology since 2000) “Genetically Engineered Crops are Safe, Analysis Finds.” May 17, 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/18/business/genetically-engineered-crops-are-safe-analysis-finds.html?_r=0>

The new report was written by a committee of 20, almost all of them from academia. There was no one from crop biotechnology companies like Monsanto or DuPont on the committee, though some members have developed genetically engineered crops and might have been consultants to the companies. The committee examined more than 1,000 studies, heard testimony from 80 witnesses in a series of public meetings and webinars, and analyzed 700 comments submitted by the public.

GMO in a majority of foods

Elizabeth Weise 2012 (Technology reporter for USA Today) “Genetically engineered foods Q & A” October 28th, 2015. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/10/28/gmo-questions/1658225/>

In the United States today a huge proportion of the most commonly grown commodity crops are genetically engineered: 95% of the nation's sugar beets, 94% of the soybeans, 90% of the cotton and 88% of the feed corn, according to the 2011 International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications report

There’s no scientific basis for mandatory GMO food labeling

Thomas A Hemphill and Syagnik Banerjee 2015 (Hemphill is a professor of strategy, innovation and public policy at the School of Management University of Michigan-Flint. Banerjee is an associate professor of mobile and interactive marketing at the school of management). September 2nd, 2015. “Genetically Modified Organisms and the U.S. Retail Food Labeling Controversy: Consumer Perceptions, Regulation, and Public Policy.” [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/basr.12062/full](file:///C:/Users/coustomer/Downloads/article%20request.pdf)

There is no question of one basic fact: The federal regulatory authorities, and specifically the FDA, have no scientific basis to require mandatory retail labeling of GMO foods. Furthermore, it is not surprising that, given the federal judiciary’s deference to the technical expertise of federal agencies and their decision-making authority, the judicial route to mandating retail labeling of GMO foods is not a viable route for public policy success.

Genetic Modification is extremely precise

David Zilberman 2014. (PhD, Agricultural Resources Economics Department, University of California) “GMOs and Global Food Security” December 18th, 2014. <https://www.geneticliteracyproject.org/2014/12/18/gmos-and-global-food-security/>

A major application of agricultural biotechnology is genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in which a gene that contains certain traits is inserted into crops to improve performance. Crop improvements in the past always occurred via changes in genetics but with traditional plant breeding, we did not actually know the changes in the genomic level because the only thing we observed were the outcomes. Genetic engineering allows for more precision, in which only a few genes are altered within a plant that has thousands or even tens of thousands of genes.

Many “GMO” Foods Are Identical To Non-GE Foods

Elizabeth Weise 2012 (Technology reporter for USA Today) “Genetically engineered foods Q & A” October 28th, 2015. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/10/28/gmo-questions/1658225/>

Many processed foods can truthfully be said to contain genetically engineered   
ingredients because most contain sugar (42% of the sugar Americans consume comes from genetically engineered sugar beets, the rest from sugar cane), vegetable oils and high-fructose corn syrup. However, in those ingredients, the processing that turns them from corn, beets or soy beans into high-fructose corn syrup, sugar or soy oil also eliminates the DNA and proteins that contain the genetic modification. They are "chemically and biologically identical" to non-GE ingredients, says Gregory Jaffe, who directs the Biotechnology Project at the   
Center for Science in the Public Interest, which has a neutral stance on the   
initiative.

GMO-Foods Contain Insignificant Amount Of GMO Ingredients

Elizabeth Weise 2012 (Technology reporter for USA Today) “Genetically engineered foods Q & A” October 28th, 2015. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/10/28/gmo-questions/1658225/>

Although it's frequently stated that 40% to 75% of the food in a typical supermarket contains genetically engineered ingredients, the actual percentage of genetically engineered material in those products is usually quite small.

Sustainability increased: GMO crops are good for the environment

David Zilberman 2014. (PhD, Agricultural Resources Economics Department, University of California) “GMOs and Global Food Security” December 18th, 2014. <https://www.geneticliteracyproject.org/2014/12/18/gmos-and-global-food-security/>

There are sustainability benefits as well. Because GMO increases the productivity of land, it reduces the amount of land we need to farm and the use of chemicals, water, energy, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture needed to produce a certain volume of food.

Accurate Assurance

Patchwork System is Unsustainable

State Senator Judy Schwank 2016. (State Senator for the 11th District in the Pennsylvania State Senate, and is minority chairwomen of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee). “Opinion: Congress needs to level the field on GMO labeling.” July 8th, 2016. <http://www.readingeagle.com/berks-country/article/opinion-congress-needs-to-level-the-field-on-gmo-labeling>

Our food supply system is national in scope, and a state by state patchwork of conflicting, complex labeling laws will not be sustainable. Complying with Vermont's law is not as easy as placing a label on a product, it will instead require that companies create entirely new production and distribution chains for their products. Inadvertent violations carry fines, and even if a company's unlabeled product winds up on Vermont shelves after the fact due to stocking and inventory issues, that company could face fines of $1,000 a day, per unit.

Allowing state labeling laws increases risk of irreparable damage to our food supply

Bob Stallman 2015. (President of the American Farm Bureau Federation) “State food labeling mandates are bad for consumers and farmers” October 7th, 2015. <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/256083-state-food-labeling-mandates-are-bad-for-consumers-and-farmers>

With each state passing unique labeling laws, consumers will be confused, not informed.  A food labeled as GMO in one state might be exempt from such a label in another.  All told, 26 states currently have pending some form of a GMO labeling law.  Each day the risk grows that our affordable and abundant food supply will be irreparably harmed by a patchwork of laws and regulations that stigmatize a safe food product.

Markets Minimized / Consumer Choice

Labels decrease options.

Thomas A Hemphill and Syagnik Banerjee 2015 (Hemphill is a professor of strategy, innovation and public policy at the School of Management University of Michigan-Flint. Banerjee is an associate professor of mobile and interactive marketing at the school of management). September 2nd, 2015. “Genetically Modified Organisms and the U.S. Retail Food Labeling Controversy: Consumer Perceptions, Regulation, and Public Policy.” [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/basr.12062/full](file:///C:/Users/coustomer/Downloads/article%20request.pdf)

With diminished economic prospects, coupled with high non-GMO purity thresholds, many food processors may decide to abandon genetically engineered food production (Sexton 2012). Previous experiences with mandatory GMO retail food labeling in the European Union, Japan, and New Zealand have resulted in grocery retailers eliminating GMO food products from their shelves, largely due to consumer aversion to these products after mandatory labeling requirements were implemented

Consumer Costs

Cornell Univ. Study: Mandatory Labeling = $500/year increased grocery cost for family of 4

Bob Stallman 2015. (President of the American Farm Bureau Federation) “State food labeling mandates are bad for consumers and farmers” October 7th, 2015. <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/256083-state-food-labeling-mandates-are-bad-for-consumers-and-farmers>

The push for mandatory state labeling comes with serious consequences for millions of Americans.  Under a patchwork of state labels, farmers, grain handlers, processors and distributors would have to segregate their crops, while manufacturers would have to reformulate and relabel products to comply with labeling requirements for every state.  Consumers, meanwhile, would pay for it all: One study from an economist at Cornell University found that state GMO labeling laws could increase grocery prices for a family of four by as much as $500 per year.

Northbridge Study: GMO Labeling = $400/year added cost for average family in California

The Editors of Scientific American 2013. (Scientific American, the longest continuously published magazine in the U.S. ) “Labels for GMO Foods Are a Bad Idea” September 1st, 2013. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/labels-for-gmo-foods-are-a-bad-idea/>

Americans who oppose genetically modified foods would celebrate a similar exclusion. Everyone else would pay a price. Because conventional crops often require more water and pesticides than GMOs do, the former are usually more expensive. Consequently, we would all have to pay a premium on non-GMO foods—and for a questionable return. Private research firm Northbridge Environmental Management Consultants estimated that Prop 37 would have raised an average California family's yearly food bill by as much as $400. The measure would also have required farmers, manufacturers and retailers to keep a whole new set of detailed records and to prepare for lawsuits challenging the “naturalness” of their products.

Non-GMO soybeans are 33% higher, non-GMO corn is 13% more

David Zilberman 2014. (PhD, Agricultural Resources Economics Department, University of California) “GMOs and Global Food Security” December 18th, 2014. <https://www.geneticliteracyproject.org/2014/12/18/gmos-and-global-food-security/>

These increases in the supply of corn and soybean in particular have allowed developing countries, particularly in Asia and Latin America, to meet the drastic increase in the demand for meats from the rising middle class. The increase in the supply of soybean in Argentina was slightly bigger than the increase in demand for soybean for meat production in China. Because small shortages in food availability lead to drastic increases in prices of food that harm mostly the poor, GMO has already made a significant positive contribution to human well-being. For example, without GMOs the price of soybean would be around 33 percent higher and about 13 percent higher for corn. These increases played a role in preventing the food crises and riots of 2008 and 2011 from becoming a global phenomenon. Without GM, the shortages that occurred during these periods were smaller than the amounts provided by GM; without GM crops, we could experience similar crises in the years ahead.

Single State laws increase costs for consumers

Emma Tozer 2016. (Master’s Candidate of the Agroecology program at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences). June 8th, 2016. “Changing Direction, Big Food Decides to Label Products Containing GMOs.” <http://www.alternet.org/food/gmo-labeling-big-food-decides-let-consumers-know-about-products-containing-gmos>

Food industry giants have expressed frustration about the absence of a national labeling standard. In a blog post published on [General Mills’ website](http://blog.generalmills.com/2016/03/we-need-a-national-solution-for-gmo-labeling/?_ga=1.150618038.1411306833.1458329168), Jeff Harmening, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for General Mills’ U.S. Retail, writes, “We can’t label our products for only one state without significantly driving up costs for our consumers and we simply will not do that.”

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

FDA agrees: Labels incorrectly imply GMO food is inferior or unsafe

Thomas A Hemphill and Syagnik Banerjee 2015 (Hemphill is a professor of strategy, innovation and public policy at the School of Management University of Michigan-Flint. Banerjee is an associate professor of mobile and interactive marketing at the school of management). September 2nd, 2015. “Genetically Modified Organisms and the U.S. Retail Food Labeling Controversy: Consumer Perceptions, Regulation, and Public Policy.” [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/basr.12062/full](file:///C:/Users/coustomer/Downloads/article%20request.pdf)

As to labeling processed retail food containing GMOs, the FDA is the lead federal agency and has the administrative authority to prevent false and misleading labeling of foods and drugs (Acosta 2014). Because, as a matter of policy, the FDA views genetically engineered food as not materially different from traditional food products, there is no need to specifically label these products as GMO retail processed food or change the name of the food product (Bashur 2013). The FDA views such a label statement as implying to consumers that GMO food is inferior or unsafe (Bashur 2013).

Fears of the few should not prevent benefits for the many

David Zilberman 2014. (PhD, Agricultural Resources Economics Department, University of California) “GMOs and Global Food Security” December 18th, 2014. <https://www.geneticliteracyproject.org/2014/12/18/gmos-and-global-food-security/>

Most of the foods we now consume are modified. In thousands of years, farmers and societies have developed varieties of corn, rice and potatoes that are totally different from their ancestors. That’s allowed us to utilize our resources much more effectively. Genetic engineering helps us understand how to breed, and how to do it more precisely and in a more sustainable manner. While fears of new technologies are understandable, the exaggerated anxiety of the few should not prevent the many from reaping the proven and safe benefits of science

Mandatory Labeling Violates the First Amendment

Layla Parker-Katiraee PhD 2015. (PhD in Molecular Genetics from the University of Toronto and a Bachelors degree in biochemistry from the University of Western Ontario. She is a Staff Scientist in DNA Sequencing Product Development). “Is the HR 1599 the SAFE Act or the DARK Act?” September 11th, 2015 <https://www.biofortified.org/2015/09/thesafeact/>

According to some experts, making companies label GMOs is a violation of the 1st amendment. The amendment which protects freedom of speech, also makes it unlawful to force speech, and this freedom is extended to commercial speech. The limits of this commercial freedom of speech have been loosely outlined in [a Supreme Court Case from 1985](https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/471/626/case.html): “Commercial speech that is not false or deceptive and does not concern unlawful activities may be restricted only in the service of a substantial governmental interest, and only through means that directly advance that interest.” It’s on this basis that Vermont’s labeling law [is being appealed in court](http://thehill.com/regulation/court-battles/241244-industry-group-appeals-federal-ruling-on-vermonts-gmo-labeling-law). It’ll be interesting to see how that court case plays out. You can read more about some commercial first amendment cases [here](http://pubcit.typepad.com/clpblog/2015/08/dc-circuit-limits-commercial-speech-disclosure-requirements.html) and [here](http://pubcit.typepad.com/clpblog/2014/07/court-of-appeals-upholds-usda-country-of-origin-labeling-for-meats.html).

Volunteer Labeling ensures consumer protection

Ian Kullgren 2016. (POLITICO Pro Agriculture reporter) “Hamburg worries about mandatory GMO labeling.” June 6th, 2016. <http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-agriculture/2016/06/hamburg-worries-about-mandatory-gmo-labeling-214661>

“I do worry that the calls for mandatory labeling of GMOs potentially send the message that these are dangerous and that concerns me going forward,” she said. “I think if people don’t want to consume GMO containing foods, they should be able to access products that meet those needs and voluntary labeling can address that.”

Advocate: Dr. Layla Parker-Katiraee Phd

Layla Parker-Katiraee 2015. (PhD in Molecular Genetics from the University of Toronto and a Bachelors degree in biochemistry from the University of Western Ontario. She is a Staff Scientist in DNA Sequencing Product Development). “Is the HR 1599 the SAFE Act or the DARK Act?” <https://www.biofortified.org/2015/09/thesafeact/>

From my perspective, HR1599 is quite comprehensive: it establishes a clear definition for a GMO, it doesn’t venture into the possibility of violating the first amendment, it forces companies to label GMOs when needed, it creates a federal registry, and creates a new federal label for non-GMO with very stringent/exclusive definitions. The only aspect of GMO-labeling which I thought was missing from the Act was a cut-off for contamination: how much GMO material will be allowed in products labeled as non-GMO. Considering the fact that much of the equipment used during the harvest, storage, and transport of food is shared, trace amounts of GMO products will be found in non-GMO material, so this will have to be defined when the certification program is outlined and established.

SAFE Act avoids confusion and price hikes, and fixes problems caused by 50 separate state rules

Bob Stallman 2015. (President of the American Farm Bureau Federation) “State food labeling mandates are bad for consumers and farmers” October 7th, 2015. <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/256083-state-food-labeling-mandates-are-bad-for-consumers-and-farmers>

We need something better than a quilt of 50 state rules governing our efficient food supply chain.  What we need is a science-based, consistent standard that upholds interstate commerce while protecting affordable food choices in the marketplace.  The Senate can deliver that by passing the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act, which passed by the House with a bipartisan 275-150 vote in July.  The bill would reaffirm the federal government’s role in food labeling and stop different state labeling laws that will be confusing to consumers and raise their food prices.

Act increases safety with FDA review of GMO plants

Bob Stallman 2015. (President of the American Farm Bureau Federation) “State food labeling mandates are bad for consumers and farmers” October 7th, 2015. <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/256083-state-food-labeling-mandates-are-bad-for-consumers-and-farmers>

The bill doesn’t cut corners.  It would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to review the safety of all new GMO plant varieties and preserve FDA authority to require a label if necessary.  But let’s be clear: There’s never been any such determination in the past, and it’s hard to see how food like that would be approved for sale in the first place.

Increased GMO-free Access

Bob Stallman 2015. (President of the American Farm Bureau Federation) “State food labeling mandates are bad for consumers and farmers” October 7th, 2015. <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/256083-state-food-labeling-mandates-are-bad-for-consumers-and-farmers>

Here’s another important point.  Consumers who want GMO-free food should have access to it, so the bill would create a national “GMO-free” program overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that would inform consumers without disrupting our entire food supply chain.  That way, anyone who wants to buy GMO-free food can do that – and know the uniform standard is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T “Right to Know” – “Right to Know” is meaningless and confusing

James Hamblin MD 2015. (Senior Editor at The Atlantic) “No One Is Denying a ‘Right to Know What's in My Food’” July 24th, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/07/no-one-is-denying-a-right-to-know-whats-in-my-food/399536/>

The central and debilitating fallacy of the “right to know” argument is the meaninglessness and misleading nature of what is being known. Humans have been practicing bioengineering for centuries with selective breeding and cultivation. The Non-GMO Project [defines](http://www.nongmoproject.org/learn-more/what-is-gmo/) “genetically modified organisms” as those “artificially manipulated in a laboratory” as opposed to “traditional cross-breeding methods,” wherein a laboratory is the nidus of transgression. It was only as recently as 1979 that Gallatin Valley Seed won the [All American Selection Award](http://all-americaselections.org/winners/details.cfm?WinID=492) for creating a variety of pea known as sugar snap, which is now ubiquitous, but carries no Franken-crop warning label. Indeed, most any act of agriculture could be considered an imposition of “unnatural” human activity into malleable, unassuming ecosystems. The domain of bioengineering is too vast and complex to know what exactly to make of blanket “GMO” labels; the hopeful premise that this is a binary indicator of good or evil is false. Should I have the “right to know” if my food contains ghosts?

A/T “Right to Know” – Sure, most folks want right to know about GMOs. They also want labels on food containing DNA

**[Duh. Doesn’t all food contain DNA at some point?]**

Katherine Mangu-Ward 2016 (journalist, editor of REASON magazine) “[80 Percent of Americans Want to Label Food That Contains DNA](https://reason.com/blog/2016/05/24/80-percent-of-americans-want-to-label-fo)” 24 May 2016 <https://reason.com/blog/2016/05/24/80-percent-of-americans-want-to-label-fo>

You might have heard that Americans overwhelmingly favor mandatory labeling for foods containing genetically modified ingredients. That's true, according to a new [study](http://fred.ifas.ufl.edu/news/gmo-knowledge-gap/): 84 percent of respondents said they support the labels. But a nearly identical percentage—80 percent—in the same survey said they'd also like to see labels on food containing DNA.

A/T “Right to Know” – The “DNA” survey [cited above] proves we can’t use surveys to guide public policy on GMO food

Katherine Mangu-Ward 2016 (journalist, editor of REASON magazine) “[80 Percent of Americans Want to Label Food That Contains DNA](https://reason.com/blog/2016/05/24/80-percent-of-americans-want-to-label-fo)” 24 May 2016 <https://reason.com/blog/2016/05/24/80-percent-of-americans-want-to-label-fo>

University of Florida food economist Brandon R. McFadden and his co-author Jayson L. Lusk surveyed 1,000 American consumers and [discovered](http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/235325/2/Manuscript%20Text%20File.pdf) that "consumers think they know more than they actually do about GM food." In fact, the authors say, "the findings question the usefulness of results from opinion polls as motivation for public policy surrounding GM food."  My summary for laymen: When it comes to genetically modified food, people don't know much, they don't know what they don't know, and they sure as heck aren't letting that stop them from having strong opinions.

A/T “Americans Want Labeling” - Surveys flawed because they didn’t tell them about the cost. Didn’t they have a “right to know” that too?

Jeff Daniels 2015. (Coordinating Producer at CNBC). “GMOs: Congress may block states from requiring labeling.” 22 July 2015. <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/07/22/gmos-congress-may-block-states.html> (brackets added)

[Center for Food Safety Director for Govt. Affairs, Colin] O'Neil said opinion surveys show around 90 percent of Americans favor requiring labels on GMO foods, although [HR1599 sponsor Rep. Mike] Pompeo countered that those surveys were "inherently flawed" since participants were not told "they'd have to pay $500 a year or more to have that labeling."

“People have a right to know what’s in their food.” – No scientific or moral basis for the “Right to Know” and consumers who eat GMOs have a right not to pay extra for labels they don’t want

Thomas A Hemphill and Syagnik Banerjee 2015 (Hemphill is a professor of strategy, innovation and public policy at the School of Management University of Michigan-Flint. Banerjee is an associate professor of mobile and interactive marketing at the school of management). September 2nd, 2015. “Genetically Modified Organisms and the U.S. Retail Food Labeling Controversy: Consumer Perceptions, Regulation, and Public Policy.” [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/basr.12062/full](file:///C:/Users/coustomer/Downloads/article%20request.pdf)

A “right” to know, as a moral right, requires that an individual act with due regard for other people’s interests, as well as his or her own; there must be a mutual sharing of the benefit of the right to know and the burdens of duties, and thus it involves a mutuality of consideration and altruism, rather than egoism. In the case of GMO food labeling, individuals have a right to accurately know if their food is “GMO free,” and thus are able to choose to purchase such food products in the marketplace. However, considering that there is no scientific basis for differentiating GMO versus non-GMO food products and that there exists no U.S. legal requirement to label food as containing GMO or non-GMO food ingredients, offering a nonbiased, standardized form of labeling of GMO free food is reasonable for those demanding it. Yet, this GMO free labeling standard should be adopted on a voluntary basis, and the market access to such food should equitably reflect the full range of costs associated with food products being GMO free. Market demand should dictate the availability and price of GMO food products, and these additional economic costs should not be borne by those not demanding GMO free food.

A/T “SAFE Act Denies Right to Know” – It doesn’t

James Hamblin MD 2015. (Senior Editor at The Atlantic) “No One Is Denying a ‘Right to Know What's in My Food’” July 24th, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/07/no-one-is-denying-a-right-to-know-whats-in-my-food/399536/>

Except that the act doesn’t deny people that right. Nothing will stop food manufacturers who avoid "genetically modified" ingredients from labeling and marketing their products accordingly. People who object to genetic modification—either because of concerns about the prudence of introducing certain crops into certain ecosystems, or because of patent laws and corporate business practices, or because these people are among the [majority of Americans](http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/29/public-and-scientists-views-on-science-and-society/) who now believe any and all “genetically modified” foods to be inherently unhealthful to consume (despite assurances to the contrary from The World Health Organization, Food and Drug Administration, American Medical Association, National Academy of Sciences, and American Association for the Advancement of Science, among others)—can continue to pay premiums for products that are marketed as “GMO free,” which implies health and safety, even while the implication is without merit. Some go so far as to call it [fraud](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2015/07/are_gmos_safe_yes_the_case_against_them_is_full_of_fraud_lies_and_errors.html).

Won’t damage non-GMO market. People worried about GMO food already have access to labeled non-GMO food.

Boston Globe Editorial 2016. “GMO Labeling Laws Promote Fear and Misinformation.” March 29th, 2016. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2016/03/28/gmo-labeling-laws-promote-fear-misinformation/CAv0kpm72mh10huRGyFnPI/story.html>

Consumers who don’t want to eat genetically modified foods can already buy non-GMO food, which is clearly labeled and has become a thriving niche industry. But a growing chorus says that’s not enough: Critics of GMOs want all food that uses genetically modified ingredients to be labeled as well, despite the lack of scientific evidence that the distinction carries any difference. Since it’s already in the interests of non-GMO foodmakers to label their foods, the only possible reason for the laws is to force labeling by companies that do use GMO ingredients.

A/T “Hurts GMO-Free Supporters” – GMO-Free is no safer than GMOs

James Hamblin MD 2015. (Senior Editor at The Atlantic) “No One Is Denying a ‘Right to Know What's in My Food’” July 24th, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/07/no-one-is-denying-a-right-to-know-whats-in-my-food/399536/>

Long-term effects of introducing certain crops into certain ecosystems, and the business practices with which they are grown and sold, are enormously important and remain to be seen and carefully considered. Some effects of agriculture will be desirable, some untoward, and effects of both kinds will come from crops that run the gamut of what has been “modified” by human intervention, and to what degree. But “GMO-free” does not mean fair trade, and it does not mean sustainable, and it does not mean monoculture-averting, and it does not mean rainforest-enabling, and it does not mean labor-friendly, and it does not mean healthy, though it puffs its chest and carries itself alongside those claims. Activists march with signs that say “I AM NOT AN EXPERIMENT.” But the state of having 7 billion food-consuming humans on this planet—6 billion [more](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/10/a-real-time-map-of-births-and-deaths/280609/) than there were two centuries ago—is an unprecedented experiment.

A/T “The SAFE act is the DARK Act” – Unfounded name perpetuated by natural food industry

James Hamblin MD 2015. (Senior Editor at The Atlantic) “No One Is Denying a ‘Right to Know What's in My Food’” July 24th, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/07/no-one-is-denying-a-right-to-know-whats-in-my-food/399536/>

It’s because of this meaninglessness, and fear perpetuated by a “natural” food industry, that a right to know is in this case a right to be misled. And this act continues to give food companies the right to tout and sell “GMO-free” as some halo of wholesome virtue, which would be lovely and elegant if it meant progress toward sustainably feeding the world healthful food, but it does not.

A/T “GMO Crops hurt People or the Environment” – NAS Study found no problems

National Academy of Sciences 2016. (The National Academy of Sciences (NASwas established in 1863 by an Act of Congress, signed by President Lincoln, as a private, nongovernmental institution to advise the nation on issues related to science and technology. Members are elected by their peers for outstanding contributions to research.) “Genetically Engineered Crops: Experiences and Prospects” <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/23395/genetically-engineered-crops-experiences-and-prospects>

There have been strong claims made about the purported benefits and adverse effects of GE crops. The committee found little evidence to connect GE crops and their associated technologies with adverse agronomic or environmental problems. For example, the use of Bt crops or HR crops did not result in substantially reduced on-farm biodiversity, and sometimes their use resulted in increased biodiversity. In terms of benefits, the evidence was mixed. Bt crops have increased yields when insect pest pressure was high, but there was little evidence that the introduction of GE crops were resulting in a more rapid yearly increases in on-farm crop yields in the United States than had been seen prior to the use of GE crops. Use of Bt crops is clearly associated with a decrease in the number of insecticide applications, but with HR crops the evidence is equivocal.

A/T “GMO Foods are Dangerous to eat” - No Evidence Supports this

National Academy of Sciences 2016. (The National Academy of Sciences (NAS was established in 1863 by an Act of Congress, signed by President Lincoln, as a private, nongovernmental institution to advise the nation on issues related to science and technology. Members are elected by their peers for outstanding contributions to research.) “Genetically Engineered Crops: Experiences and Prospects” <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/23395/genetically-engineered-crops-experiences-and-prospects>

The committee’s objective in this chapter was to examine the evidence that supports or negates specific hypotheses and claims about the risks and benefits associated with foods derived from GE crops. As acknowledged at the beginning of the chapter, understanding the health effects of any food, whether non-GE or GE, can be difficult. The properties of most plant secondary metabolites are not understood, and isolating the effects of diet on animals, including humans, is challenging. Although there are well developed methods for assessing potential allergenicity of novel foods, these methods could miss some allergens. However, the research that has been conducted in studies with animals and on chemical composition of GE food reveals no differences that would implicate a higher risk to human health from eating GE foods than from eating their non-GE counterparts. Long-term epidemiological studies have not directly addressed GE food consumption, but available time-series epidemiological data do not show any disease or chronic conditions in populations that correlate with consumption of GE foods. The committee could not find persuasive evidence of adverse health effects directly attributable to consumption of GE foods.