



Just Label It Partner Fact Sheet

URL:

www.justlabelit.org

About The Campaign

Currently, there are no FDA requirements that mandate the labeling of genetically engineered (GE , also called GMO) foods. Just Label It - *We Have a Right to Know* was created on the premise that people have a right to know what is in their food and what they are feeding their families. We have petitioned the FDA to mandate labeling for genetically engineered food. Our goal is to provide a way for the consumer's voice to be heard by flooding the FDA with comments in support of the petition.

Anticipated Activities

We have filed a legal petition (link) with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that calls for the mandatory labeling of GE foods, also referred to as genetically modified, or GMOs. The FDA carefully considers official comments from the public when drawing upon a final ruling.

Through a blend of social media, traditional media outreach, partner outreach to stakeholders, and sharing of the campaign videos, we hope to do the following:

- Drive a record number of consumers to submit comments to the FDA
- Raise awareness of this issue
- Let Washington know that Americans want labeling of genetically engineered foods

American Consumers and the Right to Know:

Several recent polls and surveys show that a great majority of Americans believe they have the right to know what is in the foods they are eating and favor mandatory labeling of GE foods. A *2010 Thomson Reuters PULSE™ Healthcare Survey* showed that **93 percent of Americans believe GE foods should be labeled** ("National Survey of Healthcare Consumers: Genetically Engineered Food"). And an overwhelming 89 - 96 percent of people who responded to online surveys favor the Right to Know (sources: ABC, the New York Times blog, MSNBC).

About Genetically Engineered (GE) Foods:

GE foods, also referred to as genetically modified organisms, or GMOs are those that are altered at the molecular level in ways that could not happen naturally. This means plants and animals have had their genetic makeup altered to exhibit traits that are not naturally theirs. These techniques use DNA molecules from different sources, sometimes different species, and combine them into one molecule to create a new set of genes (i.e. mixing of flounder genes into tomatoes so they can grow larger and more quickly).

According to the Congressional Research Service, **an estimated 60 - 70 percent of processed foods available in U.S. grocery stores likely contain some GE materials**. GE ingredients are prevalent in many products consumers buy every day including breakfast cereals, crackers, cookies, chips, sweetened soda, frozen meals and more.

The five foods that are most likely to be GE/GM unless they are certified organic or Non-GMO Project Verified are corn, soy, cotton, canola and sugar made from beets (sugar from cane is NOT GMO).

- a. Corn: 88%¹ of US corn planted is genetically engineered. The vast majority of this is not sweet corn that you eat as corn-on-the-cob (although some of that is GE too!), but corn grown for grain, animal feed, fuel, sweeteners and cooking oil. This type of genetically altered corn is found in many processed foods in different forms including high fructose corn syrup, corn oil, corn starch and corn flour. Many of the popular cereals, crackers, frozen entrees, tortillas, pizza dough, salad dressing, and corn chips likely contain GE ingredients.
- b. Soy: 94% of all soybeans planted in the US are genetically engineered. Soy is found in food in a multitude of products including soy milk, soybean oil, soy proteins, lecithin, miso, textured vegetable proteins, soy proteins, soy sauce, soy flour and soy nuts.
- c. Cotton: 90% of the cotton planted in the US is genetically engineered. Cotton finds its way into our food through cotton oil made from the cotton seeds that are removed in producing cotton fiber. Walk down the snack food aisles and pick up some chips, cookies and cakes and you will find that cottonseed oil is prevalent in US food.
- d. Canola: Over 90% of Canola oil is genetically engineered. Canola contains the lowest level of saturated fatty acids of any vegetable oil and is a rich source of Vitamin E.
- e. Sugar (from sugar beets): About 59% of the sugar produced in the US is made from sugar beets and 90% of the beets are genetically engineered. No sugar made from cane is genetically engineered.

For information on GE foods, what the science says, and ways to avoid GE food, go to www.justlabelit.org

The Coalition

More than 350 partner organizations representing the healthcare community, consumer advocates, farmers, concerned parents, environmentalists, food and farming organizations, retailers, businesses, the faith-based community, and many more concerned with protecting the consumer's right to know have joined together in support of the FDA petition and the mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods.

The list of partners will be up on the website at: justlabelit.org/about/partners

Media Contacts

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¹ 2011 data from USDA ERS
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/BiotechCrops/>