

The GMO Controversy Continues to Swirl

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Some are concerned that the potential health consequence of the use of genetically modified organisms in food is unknown because of the lack of long-term testing proving that it is safe. Fearful consumers imagine “Franken foods,” conjuring up images of over-sized ears of corn that shuffle about the fields, stiff-legged and neck-bolted.

Several states have attempted to establish regulations regarding the labeling of foods as a GMO. In California, Proposition 37 was on the table for decision in November 2012. Although the Act was favored six weeks out, a late push by opponents was successful in defeating the Act.

The only guidance currently available in California, therefore, is FDA’s statement regarding GMOs:

“[FDA] is not aware of any data or other information that would form a basis for concluding that the fact that a food or its ingredients was produced using bioengineering is a material fact that must be disclosed. FDA is therefore reaffirming its decision to not require special labeling of all bioengineered foods.”

The use of GMOs in food is a hot-button issue. Opponents of additional labeling requirements say that labeling is unnecessary and would negatively impact a consumer’s perception of a safe food product. Proponents say that the labeling gives the public the ability to make informed purchasing decisions. On the ground, however, the debate is conflating the issues – not only do proponents invoke a consumer’s right to know, but they also invoke arguments against big business and big agriculture. Another argument used is that GMOs require a large amount of pesticide, but a pioneer in the biotech field says that genetically modifying the seed to increase disease resistance leads to the use of less pesticide. For more information, see [GMO pioneer](#).

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