

GMO Foods: Why You Should Be Worried, Very Worried

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Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in foods and crops, often called Frankenstein foods, have become pervasive in the worldwide foodstream.

These pseudo foods are made from crops that are genetically altered to create a new organism with a so-called desirable trait such as insect resistance or desired nutrients.

Genetically modified (GM) technology allows selected individual genes to be transferred from one organism to another, often between non-related species. For example, insect resistant crops were created by inserting the toxin production gene from the *Bacillus thuringiensis* bacteria into the genetic structure of a plant such as corn or soybeans.

In the latter part of the 1990s, GMOs suddenly appeared in 2/3 of all U.S. processed foods. The sudden proliferation of the potentially dangerous organisms (more about that later) came about from a Supreme Court ruling that permitted patents of life forms.

Between 1997 and 1999, one-quarter of all U.S. farmland was converted to raising GM foods. Currently, GM crops are grown on more than 250 million acres of farmland worldwide.

Unless you are a fanatic food purist, you've undoubtedly ingested GMOs, whether it's in soy sauce at your favorite Chinese restaurant, popcorn at your local movie theater or indulged in an occasional candy bar.

While the labels on those foods will tell you the exact calorie count amount of carbs, protein, sugars, sodium and all, it doesn't give you one vital piece of information: that the product was made with Franken foods. You have no way of knowing and Big Agriculture wants to keep it that way.

The rapid expansion of the Frankenfood in the U.S. industry is largely due to the enormous political influence of a handful of agribusiness giants like Monsanto.

The agribusiness industry initially argued that GM crops would require fewer toxic chemicals to produce, so they'd be good for the environment. Apparently Congress and Supreme Court have bought that story hook, line and sinker.

European countries are much more cautious. GM corn (the most common genetically modified crop) has been banned in six European Union countries.

So why should you be concerned about Genetically Modified GM Food?

In terms of the growing process:

- ⤴ GM crops were a very temporary fix that has engendered the emergence of "superweeds," especially among canola or rapeseed crops, which require more herbicides to control and in more lethal dosage levels.
- ⤴ There are terminator plants and suicide seeds that do not produce a second generation, so farmers must purchase new seed every year.
- ⤴ Flowerless and fruitless "terminator trees" are designed to exude poisons from every leaf, killing most insects.

Wonder why these are called Frankenfoods? Read on.

- ⤴ Huge agribusiness conglomerates are buying up seed producing companies at a high rate. Now 55% of the planet's commercial seeds are in the hands of just 10 seed-growing companies, many of them controlled by the very companies that are the biggest proponents of GM foods. How long will it be before it is impossible to buy seeds for your home garden that have not been genetically modified? The day may not be far off when there is no food that has not been genetically altered. Some conspiracy theorists surmise this has been the

intention of mega-agribusiness from the beginning.

- ^ Information about health hazards of GM foods is scarce.
- ^ They may wipe out protected plant and insect species, causing ecological imbalances that are potentially disastrous.

What GM foods might mean in terms of human health

- ^ The biggest problem is that we do not know what effect these organisms could have on human health. Follow-up on animal studies that suggest some dire effects have not been pursued by regulators.
- ^ Proteins created by inserted genes in these plants are not recognized by mammalian organisms and can cause severe allergic reactions. These are made all the more serious because those who may be sensitive are unaware that they are consuming GM foods.
- ^ We can only surmise how the results of animal studies might translate to humans, including a five-fold increase in mortality, lower birth weight, inability to reproduce and altered DNA that may increase cancer risks.
- ^ Additional animal studies have daunting results: GM peas caused lung damage in mice. GM potatoes causes cancer in rats. Bacteria in your gut can assimilate DNA from GM foods that your body cannot recognize and to which the human body may have unpredictable reactions.

What can you do?

The most powerful tool of consumers is to vote with our pocketbooks. By refusing to buy GM foods, food manufacturers will be forced to listen.

Alternate health advocate Dr. Joseph Mercola offers a way of determining if produce comes from GM plants.

How to tell if food is Genetically Modified GM?

He says, "Examine produce stickers on the fruits and vegetables you buy. The PLU code for conventionally grown fruit consists of four numbers; organically grown fruit has five numbers prefaced by the number "9" and GM fruit have five numbers prefaced by the number "8."

He adds, "Keep in mind, too, that soy, corn, cottonseed (used in animal feeds) and canola are four of the crops most likely to be GM, and these are also ingredients commonly added to virtually every processed food. So if you eat processed foods be sure to buy only organic variety or ideally, cut them largely out of your diet."

You can also educate others by making noise and lots of it. Contact your legislators, demand regulation or, better yet, elimination of all GM foods. Write letters to the editor. Produce flyers for your local supermarkets and health food stores.

You can make a difference.

For web visitors in the USA, a very informative documentary on GM Food is available [here from Hulu](#).