

Alarmists attack biotech in California where else!

By ACSH Staff — May 25, 2012

Since their implementation in large-scale food production, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) which have helped feed many of the world's starving populations have gotten much flak from environmental groups and the organic industry. While it's safe to say that these activists have never been faced with the malnutrition or food shortages present in some countries that rely on GMOs, that has not deterred anti-biotech groups from attempting to ignite a nationwide campaign that calls on the FDA to [mandate special labeling](#) [1] for these foods.

The debate has reached a fever pitch in California, which will hold a vote in November to determine if the state will institute such labeling requirements. Almost all corn and soybeans grown in the U.S. are genetically modified, which has allowed for much greater crop yields, since these GM crops are resistant to many herbicides used for weed control. But anti-GMO activists are not concerned with increasing food production to help feed hungry nations; instead, they're worried that the food they're eating is somehow fundamentally different from the organic kind.

These activists ignore the fact that even the FDA has stepped in to defend biotech agriculture: The agency has stated that GMO labeling is generally not necessary, since genetic modification does not alter food in any substantive way.

Yet despite the science, which has long found that there are no risks associated with GM foods, anti-biotech activists in California, and their colleagues in the organic food industry, continue to push for labeling requirements. These folks are trying to use politics to do what they can't accomplish at the supermarket: increase market share, says Cathleen Enright, an executive vice president at the Biotechnology Industry Organization.

It's irresponsible to assert that GMOs pose any dangers to consumers or the environment, says ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross, since billions of tons of crops have been produced using GMO technology and harvested over many years, and still not a single case of adverse health or environmental effects from such farming practices has been documented.

Actually, adds Dr. Kava, we have been modifying the genes of food crops and animals for thousands of years; just not as efficiently as we're now able to do.

For more information on GMOs, see the ACSH publication on Biotechnology and Food [here](#) [2].

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[1] <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/25/science/dispute-over-labeling-of-genetically-modified-food.html>

[2] http://www.acsh.org/publications/pubID.289/pub_detail.asp