There’s just no stopping anti-GMO agitators, apparently

By ACSH Staff — February 1, 2013

They won’t give up, no matter the science or the votes. Anti-technology activists opposed to genetically-engineered food were defeated at the ballot box in California last year, but they’re not giving up. A propaganda piece in The New York Times, in the guise of a news story, highlights how major food companies, including Wal-Mart, held a meeting in Washington with advocacy groups who continue to promote the cause of mandatory labeling. The Times claims that the defeat of California’s Proposition 37 hasn’t quelled the demand for labeling, but has instead spawned a ballot initiative in Washington State and legislative proposals in Connecticut, Vermont, New Mexico and Missouri, and a swelling consumer boycott of some organic or natural brands owned by major food companies.

Not so fast, says ACSH advisor Greg Conko of the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington. Anti-biotech activists have been agitating for a labeling mandate for more than two decades. Proposed legislation and ballot initiatives have been introduced in various states every year for as long as I can remember. So, to suggest that the appearance this year of proposals in Washington, Connecticut, Vermont, and a few other states shows some kind of increased demand is laughable.

Vermont even passed a law 20 years ago requiring mandatory labeling of dairy products, but that was found unconstitutional, Conko notes.

The fact that big-money activists like Gary Hirshberg, chairman of the corporate organic dairy giant Stonyfield Farm, have recently sunk millions of dollars into a campaign to agitate for labeling that by sheer coincidence no doubt would advantage organic foods over less expensive alternatives, should not be confused with a public groundswell of concern.

Anti-GM fear-mongering, part two: Anti-GMO forces have also been trumpeting an obscure study that found a fragment of a viral gene in transgenic plants a claim thoroughly debunked by ACSH friend Jon Entine in Forbes. The viral gene...belongs to a plant virus (Cauliflower Mosaic virus) that cannot infect animals or humans and therefore presents no threat to human or animal health. This virus naturally infects many plants with no recorded health effects. Entine refers to folks who propagate such tripe as scientifically unwashed.

We actually frequently consume plant viruses in fact in foods such as broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage and the like. But they the vegetables, that is are known to actually protect us from cancer, Entine writes.
ACSH’s Dr. Ruth Kava adds I hope the big corporations and the FDA continue to stand firm against these calls for GMO labeling. The only ones who would really be helped by such an action would be the organic foods producers!

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