

Organic Industry, not consumers, benefits from GMO fears

By ACSH Staff — October 27, 2014



The November ballot in Maui, Hawaii will include an initiative that

would [ban growing genetically modified crops](#) [1] in the area. Members of the group that helped to get this initiative on the ballot say they feel that there is a real threat to the health of the Earth and that they do not want to be an experimental lab. However, since GMO technology began in the mid-1990s, there have been [over 2,000 studies](#) [2] providing evidence that biotechnology does not pose a health threat and that GM foods are safe or even safer than organic foods. (GM foods must get FDA approval. Breeds made by other methods need not.)

The group opposing this ban, Citizens Against the Maui County Farming Ban, argues that banning GM agriculture would kill jobs, cause a multi-million dollar economic loss, and pointlessly ban crops that have been proven safe. They also argue that both big and small farms would be hurt by the ban. Tom Blackburn-Rodriguez, a spokesman for the group, stated that the initiative was flawed, costly, and harmful. A similar anti-GMO law in Kauai County was invalidated in August, and yet another [ban in Hawaii County](#) [3] is currently being fought.

The proposed ban of genetically modified food in Maui County, as well as GMO-labeling laws (like those about to be voted on in [Colorado and Oregon](#) [4]), are truly scare campaigns backed by irrational fear instead of sound science. An op-ed in Monday's *Wall Street Journal*, [The Organic Food Protectionists](#) [5], points out what the organic industry is really attempting to gain from GMO labeling laws. For example, Oregon's labeling initiative says the state's \$233 million per year organic...industry must be protected and also states that GMO labels may create additional market opportunities for non-GMO producers.

Further, the op-ed explains that the GMO labels are meaningless, as GM technology builds on techniques that farmers have been using for 10,000 years. Also, certain foods are exempt from the laws, including meat and dairy from animals fed genetically modified feed. And if consumers are really concerned about their right to know, they could always buy food labeled certified organic,

which do not contain GMOs. The organic industry, rather than consumers, will be benefitting from these flawed laws.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross had this to say: The multi-state drive to ban, label and otherwise stigmatize GMO-biotech agricultural products is another cynical manipulation by Big Organic in the guise of protecting our public health. In fact, the opposite is true: genetically-engineered foods and products have passed the best test of all: 18 years safe and enviro-friendly use. Those calling for restrictions/bans/labels are either naive and ignorant of being manipulated, or rent-seeking self-interested organics. (Although it is true that environmental groups have also hitched on to Big Organic to promote their own parallel but equally-baseless agendas).

He adds, If folks are concerned about consuming GMO products, here's an idea: Label foods **free** of GMOs. Nothing at all to stop that from happening, is there? Oh, but that wouldn't prop up fears of Frankenfood GMOs, which is what the organic shills really want.

For a sound, expert perspective, see "Feeding the World" by ACSH [here](#) [6].

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Links

[1] <http://time.com/3532419/ballot-measures-corporations/>

[2] <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jonentine/2014/09/17/the-debate-about-gmo-safety-is-over-thanks-to-a-new-trillion-meal-study/>

[3] http://www.capitalpress.com/AP_Nation_World/20141024/lawyer-urges-judge-to-invalidate-big-isle-gmo-law

[4] <http://acsh.org/2014/10/oregon-colorado-debate-potential-gmo-labeling-laws/>

[5] <http://online.wsj.com/articles/the-organic-food-protectionists-1414366610>

[6] <http://acsh.org/2014/03/agricultural-biotechnology/>