

To label or not to label GMOs: That is the question being considered by federal lawmakers

By ACSH Staff — December 12, 2014



This past year, several states have had plebiscites on whether or not

to require that foods containing genetically engineered (GMO) ingredients be labeled. All but one of those measures were defeated: in California, Washington, Colorado and now, officially, Oregon. Vermont voters approved a labeling measure, but it has been challenged by the food industry. Spurred by individual states trying to control the labeling of GMO foods, lawmakers on the Energy and Commerce Committee introduced the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act which would establish federal labeling standards for foods with GM ingredients and give authority to the FDA to decide whether to require mandatory labeling for such products. If passed, this would preempt any existing state requirements concerning GM foods.

[At a hearing this past Wednesday](#) ^[1] to discuss this bill, Michael Landa, director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at the FDA, asserted the FDA's position that the agency is not concerned about the safety of GM foods. He said, Based on our evaluations, we are confident that the [genetically engineered foods] in the U.S. marketplace today are as safe as their conventional counterparts. He went on to say that labeling GM foods is not necessary because the FDA thoroughly reviews each GMO before it hits the market. And Representative Henry Waxman (D-Calif) adds that mandatory labeling could be misleading because it might lead some consumers to believe that the government endorses the notion that GMOs are dangerous.

Yet, the opposition is not convinced, or so they say although it may be that the proponents of Big Organic behind these measures will never be convinced to go against their own self-interest. They continue to call upon the FDA to prohibit the use of GMOs in crops. They go on to say that if GMOs continue to be used they should be labeled.

As ACSH's Ariel Savransky [has said before](#) ^[2], If a consumer really wants to make sure their food does not contain GMOs, there are other ways of doing that. For example, consumers can choose to buy organic foods, shop at stores that are committed to selling only non-GMO foods or buy

foods produced by companies who choose to label their foods as GMO free. We here at ACSH are fine with labeling, as long as those companies who are GMO-free do the labeling.

For a sound, expert perspective, see ACSH s publications on agricultural biotechnology [here](#) [3].

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Links

[1] <http://thehill.com/regulation/226643-fda-official-gmo-foods-as-safe-as-other-foods>

[2] <http://acsh.org/2014/07/gmo-labeling-considered-oregon/>

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