



GENETIC ENGINEERING: THE SECRET INGREDIENT

What the Supermarkets Don't Want You to Know

Chances are you have already eaten Genetically Engineered (GE) ingredients. Without warning or notice you have been included in a dangerous experiment on our food.

Thousands of products on the shelves of your local supermarket contain GE ingredients – foods from crops that have not evolved in any natural environment, from crops that have never before been part of the human diet.

Look at the ingredient list on any of the packaged foods in the supermarket. You are almost certain to find ingredients made from corn, soy, canola or cottonseed oil. These ingredients commonly come from plants that have been genetically altered and are being grown on millions of acres in the United States. For example, soy ingredients like lecithin, soy oil, and soy protein are found in 60- to 70 percent of all processed foods.

Yet you won't find "genetically engineered" on the label of any products containing GE ingredients. The supermarkets don't want you to know that their products are an experiment unique in human history – an experiment that doctors and scientists around the world are warning may not be safe.

Most supermarket chains have their own store brands, which are made to their specifications. All of these brands are aimed at customer loyalty, and are the pride of their companies. Three national chains in the U.S., Trader Joe's, Whole Foods and Wild Oats have already committed to removing GE ingredients from their store brand products. If these national chains can do, your local supermarket can too!

Multiple Risks and Little Testing

Unlike traditional crop or animal breeding, genetic engineering enables scientists to cross genes from bacteria, viruses, and even humans into plants and animals. Never before have scientists been able to break the species barrier. Strawberries and flounder could never breed on their own, but with genetic engineering, fish genes have been spliced into strawberries. There have been no long-term studies on what impact these crops may have on the environment, but scientists are already finding signs of trouble:

- **Biological Pollution:** Unlike chemicals that are released into the environment, genetically engineered organisms are living things that will reproduce and spread uncontrollably and at will, with little possibility of containment or clean-up.

- **Increased Pesticide Use:** Most GE crops have been designed to withstand herbicides. Studies show that farmers who grow GE soybeans use 2-5 times more herbicides than farmers who grow natural soy varieties.
- **Superweeds:** Other studies have shown that GE crops can cross-pollinate with related weeds, resulting in "superweeds" that become difficult to control. Canadian canola growers have found weeds in their fields resistant to Round-Up and Liberty herbicides, forcing the growers to use more potent toxic herbicides.
- **Threatening organic farming:** GE insect resistant crops could create "superbugs" who will build up a tolerance to a fundamental pest control tool used by organic farmers; the loss of this tool would be devastating to the safest, most environmentally friendly food production we have.

The Health Risks:

The genetic engineering industry claims that no one has been harmed by eating GE foods. But without labeling of GE ingredients, there is no way to track any harm. Doctors and scientists warn that there is not enough evidence to insure that these foods are safe in the human diet. Medical experts, including over 2,000 doctors and health professionals in Germany and the British Medical Association, have questioned the safety of GE foods. In fact, there is ample evidence of risk:

- **Allergies:** By inserting foreign DNA into common foods, without adequate safety testing, the biotech industry is introducing possible new food allergens.
- **Antibiotic Resistance:** The rise of diseases that are resistant to treatment with common antibiotics is already a serious medical concern. Doctors warn that the current use of antibiotic resistance genes in GE crops may add to this risk.

In short, Genetic Engineering is an unpredictable technology that, for the sake of corporate profits, puts our environment and health at risk.

Take Action!

- Call, fax or write your local supermarket manager or CEO and demand that they rid their store brands of GE ingredients just as Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Wild Oats, and European supermarkets have already done.
- Join the National Supermarket Campaign at: www.truefoodnow.org
- Start your own local group to flyer at your local supermarket. Download the Supermarket Activist Kit at www.truefoodnow.org for help on getting started and ideas on what you can do.