

Current Status of GMO Labeling in the US and the Anti-GMO Movement

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Outline

- A. Introduction—GMO crops and traits in US
- B. US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) policy on GMOs
- C. National Labeling Campaign
 - Right to Know March, Just Label it
- D. State Labeling Campaigns
 - California, Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, Washington
- E. Labeling campaign—market action
 - Whole Foods, Campaign for GE-Free Seafood
- F. GMO and pesticide disclosure law in Hawai'i

Major GE crops on the market

- Main traits—herbicide resistance (HR), insect resistance (Bt), virus tolerant; HR + Bt (99.5%)
- Main crops engineered:
- Soybean (HR)—93%
- Sugarbeets (HR)—95%
- Corn (Bt and HR)—88%
- Canola (HR)—93%
- Cotton (Bt and HR)—94%
- Papaya (virus tolerant)—80% (Hawaii)
- Squash/zucchini (virus tolerant)—13% (2005)

FDA Policy on Genetically Engineered Plants

1992 Statement of Policy

- Introduced at press conference at an Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) gathering on May 27, 1992 by then Vice-President Dan Quayle as a deregulatory initiative
- Based on notion “that the new techniques [e.g. genetic engineering] are extensions at the molecular level of traditional methods and will be used to achieve the same goals as traditional plant breeding” and “no basis for concluding that bioengineered foods differ from other foods in any meaningful or uniform way, or that, as a class, foods developed by the new techniques present any different or greater safety concern than foods developed by traditional plant breeding.”(57 FR 22991, May 29, 1992)

FDA Policy on Genetically Engineered Plants

1992 Statement of Policy

- No requirement for human safety testing, only “voluntary safety consultations”; to date, some 97 voluntary safety consultations have been held

Key phrases in US Food and Drug Administration safety consultation letters

- MON 810 (Bt corn), dated Sept. 26, 1996
- “Monsanto submitted a summary assessment of corn containing transformation event MON 810 on June 6, 1996”
- “Based on the safety and nutritional assessment you have conducted, **it is our understanding that Monsanto has concluded that corn products derived from this new variety are not materially different in composition, safety, and other relevant parameters from corn currently on the market, and that the genetically modified corn does not raise issues that would require premarket review or approval by FDA.**”
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodScienceResearch/Biotechnology/Submissions/ucm161107.htm>
- A variation of these two sentences are found in all 97 safety consultation letters
- FDA does not require premarket safety assessment and does not state its own opinion about the safety of the GE crop

FDA. 2001. Premarket Notice Concerning Bioengineered Foods. Federal Register January 18, 2001. Vol. 51(12): pp. 4706 – 4738

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/Biotechnology/ucm096149.htm>

- "[B]ecause some rDNA-induced unintended changes are specific to a transformational event (e.g. those resulting from insertional mutagenesis), **FDA believes that it needs to be provided with information about foods from all separate transformational events**, even when the agency has been provided with information about foods from rDNA-modified plants with the same intended trait and has had no questions about such foods. **In contrast, the agency does not believe that it needs to receive information about foods from plants derived through narrow crosses** [e.g. traditional breeding]" italics added (FR 66(12), pg. 4711)
- FDA admits that there is a difference between GM and traditional breeding, yet they still follow the 1992 policy

Campaign for GMO food labeling National

- Right to Know March, from New York City to Washington, DC, 1–16 October, 2011 calling for federal labeling of GMO Food and support for GMO Labeling petition



Right 2 Know Marchers at White House, October 16, 2011

Campaign for GMO food labeling

National

- **Just Label It (JLI)**

- October 4, 2011 JLI (www.justlabelit.org), coalition of almost 400 organizations, submit Citizen Petition to US FDA asking them to require labeling of genetically engineered (aka GMO) food
- March 27, 2012 record setting 1.1 million people write FDA in support of the Citizen Petition

Campaign for GMO food labeling

State: California

- March 30, 2012 Grassroots organization (LabelsGMO.org) submits 971,126 signatures on Ballot Initiative for California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act; becomes Proposition 37

Campaigns for GMO food labeling

State: California

Yes on Prop 37,
coalition of
organizations and
business which support
GMO Food Labeling,
rally throughout
California in support of
Prop 37



Pamm Larry, Prop 37 initiator

Campaigns for GMO food labeling

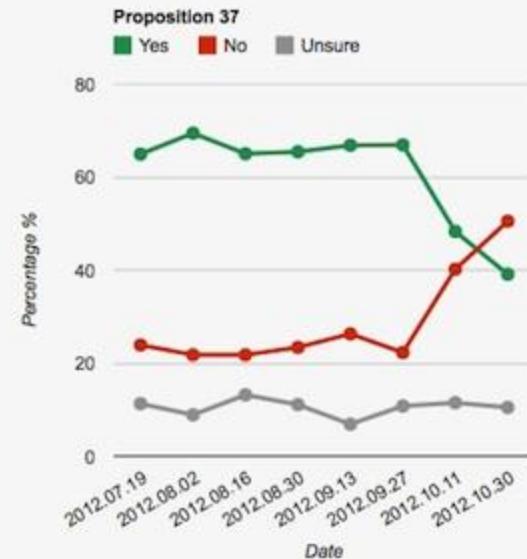
State: California

- Yes on Prop 37 spends \$9.2 million
 - Top donors:
 - Mercola Health Resources (\$1.2 million), Kent Whealy (\$1 million), Nature's Path Foods (\$610,709), Dr. Bronners Magic Soap (\$620,883), Organic Consumers Fund (\$605,667)
- No on Prop 37 spends \$46 million
 - Top donors:
 - Monsanto (\$8.11 million), DuPont (\$5.40 million), Pepsi (\$2.58 million), Grocery Manufacturers Association, Kraft Foods, BASF, Bayer Crop Science, Dow, Syngenta (\$2 million)

Campaigns for GMO food labeling

State: California

- Results: November 7, 2012 Prop 37 fails Yes 48.6%, No 51.4%
- Prior to No on Prop. 37 TV ads, which began on October 1, 2012, support for Prop 37 was 62%



Campaign for GMO food labeling States

- Close defeat of Prop. 37 energizes pro-GMO labeling forces, leads to grassroots coalition to get GMO labeling in the states, called Right to Know GMO campaign (www.righttoknow-gmo.org)
- 26 states introduce GMO labeling bills

Campaign for GMO food labeling

State: Vermont

- May 10, 2013 Vermont Right to Know Coalition (www.vpirg.org/gmo), get Vermont House of Representatives to pass GMO labeling bill (H. 112) by vote of 99-42
- June 2013 Vermont legislative session ends before Senate has time to vote on the bill



Vermont House celebrates passage of H. 112, May 10, 2013

Campaign for GMO food labeling

State: Connecticut

- GMO Free Connecticut (gmofreect.org), with large coalition of partners, get CT House to pass GMO labeling bill by 134-3 and unanimously in Senate
- June 3, 2013 CT becomes first state to require labeling of GM food, but bill will not go into effect until 4 other states also pass GMO labeling bill



Tara Cook-Littman, GMO-Free CT speaks after passages of GMO labeling bill, June 3, 2013

Campaign for GMO food labeling

State: Maine

- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardiners Association (mofga.org), and other organizations, get Maine House of Representatives to pass GMO labeling bill (LD 718) by 141-1 and unanimously in Senate
- June 12, 2013 Maine becomes second state to require labeling of GM food, but bill will not go into effect until 4 other states also pass GMO labeling bills



Votes in support of LD718 in Maine Senate, June 12, 2013

Campaign for GMO food labeling

State: Washington

- June 29, 2012 Initiative 522 (I-522), “The People’s Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act” filed with Washington Office of Secretary of State
- I-522 petition must get signatures of 246,732 registered voters by January 4, 2013
- Yes on 722 coalition (www.yeson522.com)
- I-522 petition gets > 553,000 signatures

Campaign for GMO food labeling

State: Washington

- Hearings held on I-522 in both Senate (February 14, 2013) and House of Representatives (March 6, 2013), but no votes taken, so I-522 goes on the ballot for November 5, 2013.



Campaign for GMO food labeling

State: Washington

- Yes on I-522: \$7.7 million as of 29 October
 - Top donors:
 - Dr. Bronners Magic Soap (\$1.84 million), Center for Food Safety Action Fund (\$455,000) Mercola Health Resources (\$300,260), Organic Consumers Fund (\$298,076)
- No on 1-522: \$46 million as of 29 October
 - Top donors:
 - Monsanto (\$5.37 million), DuPont Pioneer (\$3.88 million), PepsiCo (\$2.35 million), Nestle USA (\$1.53 million), Coca-Cola (\$1.52 million)

Campaign for GMO food labeling

State: Washington

- September 10, 2013 Poll: 66% of votes “probably” or “definitely” will vote for I-522
- October, 2013: No on I-522 TV ads begin
- October 25, 2013: 2 polls show I-522 ahead by small margins 45% to 38% or 46% to 42%
- November 5, 2013: ???

Campaign for GMO Food labeling

Market action: Non-GMO Project

- 2007, Non-GMO Project, non-profit organization, set up to develop a Non-GMO label and offer independent testing and verification of their label
- 2010, Non-GMO Project Verified seal comes on market



- June 19, 2013 Non-GMO Project gets approval from US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use its label on meat and liquid egg products from animals not fed GMOs

Campaign for GMO Food labeling

Market actions

- September 2013, sales of Non-GMO Project Verified items exceeds \$3.5 billion, more than 8,000 products labeled
- March 2013: Whole Foods Market announces they will label all their food in stores in the US and Canada as to GMO status by 2018

Campaign on GMO salmon

- September 2010 US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says GMO salmon, engineered to grow faster poses no safety issues
- September 26, 2010 poll shows 78% Americans believe FDA should not approve GMO salmon (http://www.saynotogmos.org/ud2010/docs/fish_survey.pdf)
- December 26, 2012 FDA says GMO salmon poses no environmental risk
- April 2013 1.8 million people submit comments to FDA opposing approval of GMO salmon

Campaign on GMO salmon

- March 20, 2013 Campaign for GE-free Seafood—coalition of more than 30 consumer, health, food safety and fishing groups—announce that major retail grocery retailers (over 2,000 stores) will not sell GMO salmon if approved, including Trader Joe's (367 stores), Aldi (1,230 stores) and Whole Foods (325 stores) (<http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2013-03-top-grocery-stores-wont-sell-genetically-engineered-seafood>)
- May 29, 2013 Target (1,394 stores) plus other retailers agree not to sell GMO salmon. 59 retailers, with 4,662 stores

Hawaii bill on GMO and pesticide disclosure

- Many GMO crops are field tested in Hawai'i or grown for seed, so there is a lot of pesticide use
- June 2013, Bill 2491, introduced in Kaua'i county, requires disclosure of growing of GMO crops (both area and location), and disclosure of use of pesticides within the county
- Pass the Bill, a broad coalition of Kaua'i moms, health care professionals, farmers, and civic leaders committed to passing Bill 2491; 53,000 people have signed Petition in support of Bill 2491

Hawaii bill on GMO and pesticide disclosure

- September 8, 2013 March in support of Bill 2491. Largest march in Kaua'i history



Hawaii bill on GMO and pesticide disclosure

- October 16, 2013. After 19 hour hearing, Kaua'i County Council passes Bill 2491 by 6-1 vote
- October 31, 2013 Kauai Mayor Bernard P. Carvahlo Jr. vetoes Bill 2491