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GMOs, yes or no?

April 24, 2012

By [Bree Shirvell](#)



Ask 10 people what they think of genetically modified foods and you'll get 10 different answers.

Some will ask 'What's a GMO?' Some, like Prince Charles, will tell you GMOs "are the biggest environmental disaster of all time."

Others, like the [Monsanto Corp.](#), will tell you GMOs are beneficial to the environment and perfectly safe. And many Americans, despite products containing GMOs being on the shelf of supermarkets for nearly two decades, are still trying to sort GMOs out.

Genetically modified foods, GM foods or GMOs refer to food, most often crops, which is created through a process of genetic engineering whereby the genes of one organism are transformed to another to create such food crops as corn that are herbicide-tolerance and insect resistance.

State governments across the United States are getting ready to take up the debate, and while most won't wade into the environment and health controversies that surround GMOs, they will decide if consumers have the right to know if their food contains GMOs.

In Connecticut, state legislators will likely vote on a bill requiring the listing of GMOs on food labels in the next few months. While the bill, HB 5117, won early support from several state representatives and senators, farmers markets and chefs, there is also strong opposition. [The Connecticut Farm Bureau and the state Department of Agriculture](#) oppose the bill, saying it is the responsibility of the federal Food and Drug Administration to require labeling, not the states.

Connecticut, however, is one of 20 states considering similar bills. In California, there is a grassroots movement from the [Organic Consumers Association](#) to get genetically modified food labels on the November 2012 ballot. And in Vermont, where [90% of voters support a bill mandating GMO labeling](#), the Monsanto Corp. has threatened to [sue the state](#) if the legislators pass the bill. The state has about a month to vote on the bill before the end of the current legislative session.

On the national level, the Just Label It campaign that would require GMOs labeling submitted more than 1 million comments to the FDA as part of its petition. The FDA has [not yet responded](#) to the petition.

While Americans wait for the GMO labeling debate to play out, there are several resources they can use to learn more about GMOs. [Non-GMO Shopping Guide](#) provides a resource for learning what foods have and don't have GMOs, while [the Alliance for Better Foods](#) talks about the environment and safety of GMOs taking a pro-GMOs stance.

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