



Consumer choice is dependent on the ability to choose clearly labelled genetically modified (GM) or non-GM food. The newly introduced labelling regulation provides the framework for that choice. Such labelling takes into account GM threshold levels so that the labelling process can be enforceable and endorseable.

The purpose of the GM food/feed and the traceability and labelling regulations (Regulations 1829/2003 and 1830/2003) are to inform consumers and farmers about the exact origins of food or feed, so that they are able to make an informed choice about the products they decide to buy.

What are the labelling regulations?

- **All food ingredients made from GM crops approved in the EU will be labelled** even if they contain no detectable transgenic DNA or protein in the final product.
- **GM products should be traceable at all stages** 'from the farm gate to the supermarket shelves'. A chain of documents or certificates will be used to ensure that products containing even small amounts of GM ingredients will be labelled as such.
- **Food additives** such as colours, flavourings and emulsifiers from GM sources must also be labelled. Processing aids, such as enzymes, do not need to be labelled, whether they are GM-derived or not.
- **There is no requirement for labelling if each ingredient** has been made from raw material with an adventitious GM content of less than 0.9% of approved GM material.
- **All GM animal feed should be labelled** if it contains more than 0.9% GM material. The regulations do not apply to meat, eggs, milk (and other products) derived from animals fed with GM fodder.

What do the regulations mean for consumers in the EU?

From mid-April 2004, consumers will be able to make an informed choice - the choice whether to buy and consume clearly labelled foods that are grown using GM crops.

The labelling introduced by these regulations results from demand for more information and does not result from any food safety concerns or because GM crops are different in composition or nutrition. Many independent scientific bodies agree that there are no risks to health in consuming food produced using GM ingredients, which have been stringently tested to ensure that they are just as safe as any other foods - indeed, they are more safe since most foods are not tested at all.

Under EU legislation, product labels will feature the following statements - "this product contains genetically modified organisms" or "this product (e.g. oil) is produced from genetically modified product name (e.g. soya)".

Once labelling systems are in place, a product not carrying a label will mean that it was not made with a GM ingredient (or was made with ingredients with 'adventitious presence' below 0.9%).

The presence of a label means that the product was made with an ingredient that has a GM content greater than 0.9%.





GM Crops: Labelling and Traceability

Labelling for consumer choice and confidence

The EU regulations were set in place to provide information and give consumers an informed and transparent choice - they are not and never were about the safety of GM products. Only GM products that are as safe as existing non-GM products are allowed on our shelves.

- Each national authority defines the exact measures for the implementation of the regulations in their country.
- Compliance with the labelling regulations will be ensured by a robust documentation trail.
- In the UK, various bodies, including the Advertising Standards Authority, the Food Standards Agency and Local Authorities will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulations.



Moving forward

abc believes that real consumer choice means being free to choose between different foods and products. This is why the agricultural biotechnology council supports labelling and clear product information to promote informed consumer choice.

Consistently, public opinion polling and other research shows that the majority of European consumers want choice and do not necessarily reject GM products. The stringent regulations will help to provide consumers with a clear and transparent choice.

Industry will continue to work to ensure that there is real and informed consumer choice for all in the UK by:

- Continuing to help in the development of rigorous standards for labelling, working towards clear, accurate and practical information.
- Continuing to work with UK and EU regulatory bodies to promote public understanding of the regulatory process.

Further information can be found at the following websites

Food Standards Agency

http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk/science/sciencetopics/gmfoods/gm_labelling
http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/new_reg

EU information

http://europa.eu.int/index_en.htm
<http://www.efsa.eu.int/>

UK Government

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/eu/index.htm>

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