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April 30, 2000

RE: Genetically Modified Foods Docket #00P-1211/CP1

Commissioner Jane Henney

FDA Dockets Management Branch HFA-305

5630 Fishers Ln RM 1061

Rockville, MD 20852

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Dear Commissioner Jane Henney,

I am writing to express my opinions and fears about genetically modified foods, and particularly in your case unlabeled genetically modified foods. I am quite concerned with the use of genetically modified foods as there are no long-term studies that question their long-term effects, both on the environment and my health.

In Europe, consumers were so concerned about genetically engineered foods that they swiftly enacted legislation that requires mandatory labeling. In the United States, Gerber has announced that it will no longer use genetically engineered foods in their baby products and Frito-Lay has announced that they will not be using genetically engineered corn in their corn chips.

Emerging studies show that genetically engineered foods could create antibiotic resistance, new toxins, allergic reactions, and other dietary risks for consumers. According the Union of Concerned Scientists [USC], most genetically engineered foods carry antibiotic resistance genes, which reduce the effectiveness of antibiotics to fight diseases such as strep throat and tuberculosis. Wind and bees can also carry pollen from genetically engineered plants into neighboring crop areas, this "genetic" pollution can further spread to outlying ecosystems. And once there, unintended varieties of plants may be created, potentially producing "superweeds." Similarly, "superbugs" may be crated. Scientists at the University of Arizona conducted a peer-reviewed lab study indicating that insects might develop resistance to genetically engineered [Bt] cotton plants more quickly than expected, which could potentially spread to regular unmodified plants. Cornell University lab studies found monarch butterflies were stunted and killed by eating pollen from genetically modified corn. These finding have implications for other beneficial insects that may also be affected by toxins from genetically engineered crops.

I would also like to point out that individuals who may have ethical or religious dietary concerns may be unwittingly consuming foods that contain genes from other species and this could pose quite a problem for them.

As you can see I feel quite strongly about this issue. I feel that it is something that we should be leaving alone altogether but at the very minimum I feel anything containing genetically modified ingredients should be labeled as such so that people can make a choice for themselves. As it is now we have no way of knowing if our food contains genetically engineered foods except by shopping at the high priced health food stores that label their food as having no genetically engineered ingredients.

Respectfully yours,



Nisha Dawson

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