

January 25, 2001

Jane Henney, Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

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Dear FDA Commissioner Jane Henney,

I am allergic to milk. Before I buy any product in the grocery store, I have to read the ingredients label. I am concerned that at some time in the future, the genes that code for milk proteins may be transferred into crop plants where they don't belong. Milk is essential for the health of most Americans. But, for me it is deadly. I am concerned that without the requirement that all genetically engineered foods be labeled, I may no longer be able to know which food products I can safely by, and which ones will make me sick.

I am writing to request that the FDA require the mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered foods, regardless of whether the food is in its whole form or as an ingredient in processed foods.

Recently, the national media has run numerous stories about how millions of tons of StarLink corn – possibly allergenic and unapproved for human consumption – was accidentally used in Taco Bell taco shells, as well as other corn products. This fiasco highlights the great importance of protecting consumers' safety through labeling.

Public opinion polls show the vast majority of Americans want genetically engineered foods labeled. (81% in a 1999 *Time* magazine poll.) Yet the FDA is allowing genetically engineered foods to come to market unlabeled arguing these foods are no different than those produced by typical hybridization. Studies, however, show crops modified by genetic engineering may contain increased levels of natural toxins and lower levels of valuable nutrients.

The FDA says that if a genetically engineered food contains a known allergen it must be labeled. But what about the unknown allergens that may be created in these experimental foods? Genetically engineered crops often contain proteins that have never before been consumed by humans as food. Further, there are serious questions about the safety of these crops for the environment. And people with certain ethical or religious beliefs worry about inadvertently eating genes from foods they would not knowingly consume.

I do not want to eat genetically engineered corn or potatoes that contain the Bt toxin. Nor do I want to eat "Roundup Ready" soybeans or other future products such as tomatoes that contain the gene from a fish! But without labeling, I cannot avoid it. I request that the FDA require all genetically engineered foods and ingredients be labeled. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Allen
8131 Meadowdale Court
Longmont, CO 80503

C10806



Stephen J Allen
8131 Meadowdale Ct
Longmont, CO 80503-8531



JANE HENNEY, COMMISSIONER
FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION
5630 FISHERS LANE
ROCKVILLE, MD 20857

