

February 20, 2001

Commissioner, Food & Drug Administration  
Dockets Management Branch (HFA 305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fisher's Lane, rm. 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket No. 00N-1396, and 00D-1598

Dear Commissioner,

The recent standards on genetically-engineered (GE) foods proposed by the FDA seriously fail to protect consumers. These standards NEED be strengthened. The public overwhelmingly supports testing and labeling of products that contain GE foods. I take my family's nutrition very seriously and deserve to know what I am feeding them! I especially worry about my infant son who will be most affected by the standards that are set today. There are a few specific areas of this issue that I would like to address:

Notification Policy - The "notification" policy is a joke. It truly is an insult to consumers and irresponsibly ignores the strong scientific evidence of numerous potential health and environmental risks associated with GE foods. Why do you think Europeans are against GE foods? Obviously for the same reason many Americans are - **these foods could be toxic, could cause allergic responses, could have lower nutrition value, could compromise immune responses, and could cause irreparable damage to the environment.** What kind of future will that leave for my family? What's the benefit to the average American for enacting your policies? Instead of trusting the FDA to regulate what we all put in our mouths we will instead be handed a plate of uncertainties. At the very LEAST, GE crops and foods should be thoroughly tested, in a timely manner, to determine their true nature and effects on humans.

Voluntary Labeling - Your proposed system of "voluntary labeling" is ridiculous. That's like leaving a child with a sweet tooth in the middle of a candy store and telling them not to touch anything. Some children would listen, but many would not! Companies already have the right to label products "GE free." Those who want to give consumers a choice bear the cost of testing and labeling, while companies who do use GE ingredients are not obligated to disclose it. Why aren't GE food companies held accountable? Why aren't all foods tested for safety matters? Isn't that the purpose of the FDA?

Without mandatory labeling, neither consumers nor health professionals will know if an allergic or toxic reaction was the result of a genetically engineered food. Just look at the rise in the amount of childhood allergies and asthma, which may or many not be linked to consumption of GE foods, but if testing and labeling is not required we may NEVER know. As a result, consumers are deprived of the critical knowledge they need to hold food producers liable should any of these novel foods indeed prove hazardous. This proposed rule favors industry, rather than the public your administration is supposed to protect. Please stop making Americans guinea pigs.

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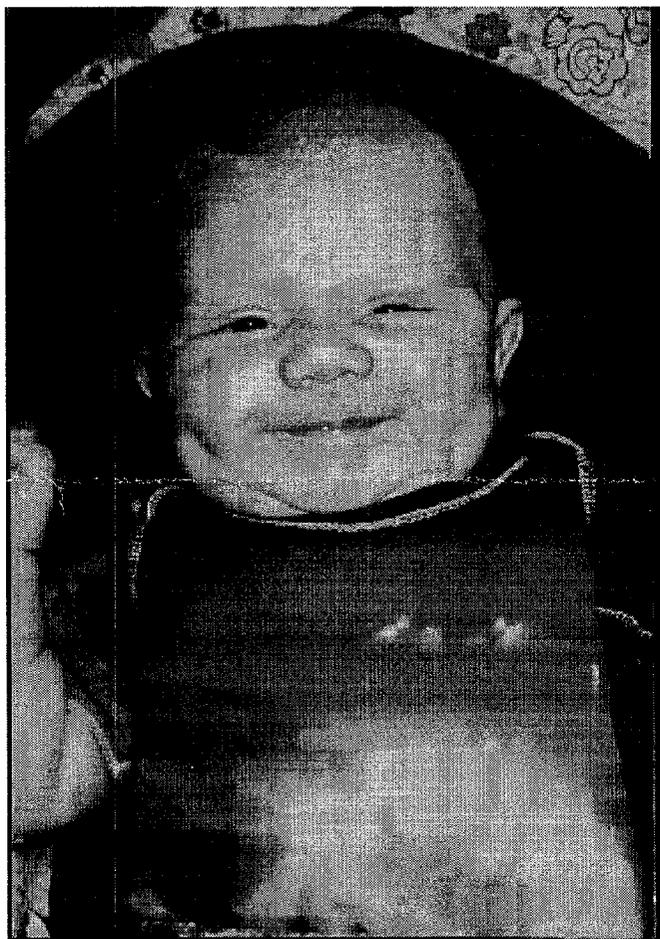
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I am hopeful that the FDA will reevaluate their position on this issue. I would appreciate knowing how you plan to address this situation. I've enclosed a photo of my son – please think of **HIS** future when you make your final decision. We're all counting on the FDA to do what's right - require the testing and labeling of ALL GE products! Please stop letting political dollars control our safety policies in this country. Consumers have the right to know! Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Kozak". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sarah Kozak



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