

Merrimack Valley
Environmental Coalition
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March 6, 2001

FDA Commissioner
Docket No. 00N-1396/OOD-1598
FDA Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear FDA,

The Merrimack Valley Environmental Coalition is a coalition of local environmental groups in **Haverhill**, Lawrence, Andover, North Andover, Methuen and Lowell, Massachusetts with a mailing list of over 320. We are writing to express our dismay with the FDA's weak oversight regarding genetically engineered foods.

You are well aware of the issues centered on genetically engineered foods, which range from the ethical to the environmental. Therefore, we shall cut to the chase by simply but adamantly stating that the new FDA ruling calling for voluntary labeling of our food is woefully inadequate. In fact, it smacks of pandering to the industry. Is it any wonder that no GE food producers have agreed to label their products? Consumers continue to be **left** in the dark when attempting to second guess whether their food has been genetically modified.

Let's get busy with seriously protecting the health and safety of the general public and honoring our right to know! Strong, mandatory guidelines centered on labeling genetically modified foods must be enacted post haste. Consumers have the right to know what they are eating.

More to the point, a moratorium on genetically engineered foods must be put in place until it is truly known that they do not hamper the health and safety of living things.

The Food and Drug Administration's first priority must be to protect the consumer---not the profits of corporate giant food producers. Rest assured, the public is watching.

Sincerely,


Edward Meagher, Co-chair

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