

March 8, 2001

Dear FDA Commissioner,

I am writing to you to protest the FDA proposal that there be no mandatory testing, or labeling of genetically engineered foods. This is dangerous to public health and to the environment. This is against what the majority of Americans want. How can people avoid allergens in modified foods if the foods are unlabeled? What will we do when dangerous genes spread into wild plant forms, and invade the environment? Should we wait until something goes horribly wrong, and then frantically try to solve problems that could have been avoided in the first place? How many Americans must die of anaphylactic shock before these products get labeled?

Monsanto developed the "Terminator gene" to make the second generation of a crop sterile so that people cannot save seeds. They must buy new seeds, every year. Before these seeds are released into American croplands, I would like to know what percentage of other crops will be contaminated by the Terminator gene. Pollen spreads these genes by wind, water, and insects. How many wild crops, which we depend on for food biodiversity, will be infected? This gene is in every plant that Monsanto modifies, including trees in tree farms. When this gene spreads into other trees, this means that their offspring can't produce flowers, fruit, or seeds which insects, birds, animals, and humans depend upon for food. What about genetically modified animals, such as fish?

Regardless of what the actual valid pros and cons of genetically modified foods are, we are allowed to make choices about what we will and won't buy. Notice the enclosed candy wrapper clearly states, "may contain peanuts," to prevent someone from dying horribly due to a peanut allergy. This particular candy bar actually does not have peanuts, but could contain trace amounts from the manufacturing machinery. The FDA requires cosmetics, cigarettes, alcohol, and prescription drugs to be labeled; can't we have the same disclosure on our food? Considering how many toxic products Monsanto, Dow, and Phillip Morris are able to sell with full labeling, why does Monsanto need to resort to outright deception? It's wrong that these heavily subsidized, tax sheltered, corporations are trying to squeeze out a few more drops of profit from unwilling, misinformed people. It's also wrong for them to use economic sanctions to force their untested, unlabeled products on other countries.

We are not "consumers!" We are people who must eat daily, and can't take a risk with every mouthful. It is wrong that these companies knowingly manufacture cancer-causing chemicals, which contaminate our food supply, while their pharmaceutical subsidiaries make overpriced "cures" for cancer. This is covert, corporate murder, as much as shooting people in the street! The hormones in our meat and dairy products are decreasing the age of puberty onset in our children. This is what is increasing our "teen sex and violence" problems, this, and the pharmaceutical drugs that are pushed on our children. If the FDA will not protect us from genetically engineered foods, we demand that these products be labeled so that we have a fighting chance to protect ourselves.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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FDA Commissioner  
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Food and Drug Administration

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Docket # 00D-1598 and 00D-1596