

2 March 2001

FDA Office of Consumer Affairs
Advisory Committees Desk
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 16-85
Rockville, Maryland 20857

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Dear Consumer Representative:

My name is Michael Grosh and I am junior in college. I am writing you today to show my concern with the use of genetic engineering in food production. By now, millions of acres of genetically-engineered crops have been planted, and nearly two-thirds of the products on our supermarket shelves contain genetically engineered ingredients. But GE foods remain poorly studied; scientists simply cannot say with any authority that they are absolutely safe for human consumption. Essentially, we have been subjected to a massive experiment on human health. This, along with other potential dangers, is why the Food and Drug Administration should ban the use of genetic engineering in the production of food.

According to studies, genetic engineering is a young and in many ways poorly understood technology. Many scientists believe that genetically engineered foods have been rushed much too quickly to market – to boost multinationals' profit margins – before adequate testing has been completed to ensure public health. The *Washington Post* states that the dearth of studies is the legacy of a U.S. policy that considers gene-altered plants and food to be fundamentally the same as conventional ones, a policy some Americans are starting to question. It is also the legacy of broken promises by the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency that is inciting these questions. The FDA has consistently maintained that GE foods are safe, even though many scientists disagree. In June 1999, the Alliance for Bio-Integrity – one of the parties in a lawsuit against the FDA to force the agency to label GE foods – received internal FDA documents that show that some of the FDA's own scientists have doubts about the safety of genetically engineered foods.

One potential danger genetic engineering is that it may trigger allergies in people. Genetic engineering may involve the transfer of new and unidentified proteins from one food to another, with the potential of causing allergic reactions. These allergies are not simple a matter of slight discomfort; they can potentially result in life-threatening anaphylactic shock. Without labeling, people with allergies will not know whether they are eating foods that contain genes from other foods to which they are allergic.

This massive experiment on human health will continue unless the Food and Drug Administration takes the initiative to stop the use of genetic engineering in the production of food. Even if you shop at the local health food store, you may be eating some genetically engineered foods. So as a consumer representative I trust you will consider my points to be valid and initiate a change not just for me, but for the entire American public.

Sincerely,

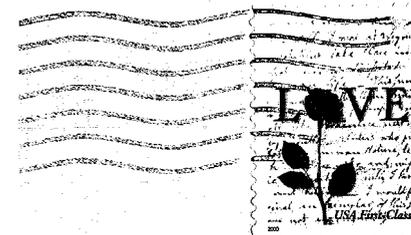


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