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Hanoi, Vietnam

Commissioner Jane Henney
FDA Dockets Management Branch
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061 (HFA-305)
Rockville, MD 20852 USA

4 1 3 0 '00 APR 26 P 2 :42

April 11, 2000

**Re: Docket No. 00P-1211/CP1
Docket No. 99N-4282**

Dear Commissioner Henney,

I am writing in support of the establishment of stringent pre-market safety testing regulations and labeling for genetically engineered (GE) foods.

As a biologist, I understand that inserting foreign genes into a living organism may result in the production of chemicals that have never been part of human food before, or that are highly atypical for a certain food item. Some of these chemicals may interfere with the nutritional value of foods, or the overall nutritional balance of consumer diets. Others may be toxic. These effects are presently unpredictable. It is, therefore, shocking that no safety testing was required before allowing the marketing of GE foodstuffs in the United States.

Better late than never. A system should be set up that is similar to FDA safety testing of new drugs. The issues are similar. The familiar drug testing model should be adapted to the science and consumption patterns of GE foods. Private industry should pay for the entire regulatory structure and process for GE foods because seed companies and related private enterprises will profit from these products. They should no longer be allowed to profit from placing public welfare at risk.

Now, and even after safety testing is in place, GE foods should be labeled. At present, with no safety testing in place, the prohibition of clear and prominent labeling robs concerned consumers of the freedom of choice to protect themselves. This is unacceptable. Just as with drugs, a safety testing system is bound to produce contraindications for certain classes of consumers. Therefore, a requirement to label GE foods, and in some cases to package them with detailed safety precautions (just as for drugs), should be permanent.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. They should be implemented if the FDA is serious about fulfilling its responsibility to protect the health and safety of U. S. citizens.

Sincerely yours,



Patricia C. Matteson
U. S. citizen abroad

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