

Genetically Engineered (GE) Food Labeling Fact Sheet

In 2014, Vermont became the first state to require mandatory GE labeling. Connecticut and Maine have also passed GE labeling laws that will go into effect once neighboring states pass similar laws. In response to these state efforts, legislation developed by some food companies – dubbed the Denying Americans the Right to Know or DARK Act - has been introduced in the House of Representatives and similar legislation may soon be introduced in the Senate.

The “Denying Americans the Right-to-Know” (DARK) Act would:

- Preempt states from requiring labeling of GE food.
- Codifies the current, broken voluntary labeling system.
- Creates new barriers to national mandatory GE labeling system.
- Create a GE “review” system based on industry science, impossible deadlines, and loopholes.

Americans want the Right to Know:

- Polls show 90% of Americans support labeling of GE food, regardless of party, income or education level.
- Bogus “natural” claims have created enormous consumer confusion.
- 64 nations require labeling including Russia, China, the EU, and important trading partners in Asia.
- Nearly 1.4 million Americans have joined a petition urging FDA to require labeling of GE food.
- 200 companies and organizations recently signed a letter to President Obama urging him to honor his 2007 pledge to require GE labeling.¹
- In 2013 and 2014, more than 70 GE labeling bills or ballot initiatives were proposed across 30 states.

Dispelling GE Labeling Myths:

- **GE labeling will not increase food prices.** Companies frequently change labels to highlight new innovations. The retail price of food is impacted by many factors, not simply the cost of making food.²
- **Voluntary labeling will not work.** Companies have been allowed to make voluntary GE disclosures for more than a decade and not a single company has ever revealed whether their food contains GE ingredients.
- **GE crops do not feed the world.** Conventional and GE corn and soybean yields have increased at the same rate. What’s more, U.S. farmers produce only 4% of rice, wheat, fruits, and vegetables, and most US corn and soybeans are used for livestock feed and ethanol, not food.³
- **GE crops have increased herbicide applications.** Expanding the use of GE crops has increased herbicide applications between 1996 and 2012 by 527 million pounds.⁴
- **GE crops have led to more toxic herbicides.** As weeds have become resistant to GE herbicides, farmers have turned to more toxic weed killers linked to Parkinson’s disease and reproductive problems.
- **GE crops have not reduced soil erosion.** Adoption of soil-conserving farm practices were made in response to “conservation compliance” provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill.⁵

¹ http://static.ewg.org/pdf/2014-GE-Labeling-Letter-to-President-Obama.pdf?_ga=1.43874470.2058587466.1399901646

² <http://justlabelit.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Kai-Roberston-Food-Labeling-Study-2013.pdf>

³ <http://www.ewg.org/agmag/2014/10/little-ground-truth-world-food-day>

⁴ <http://www.enveurope.com/content/24/1/24>

⁵ <http://www.ewg.org/research/debunking-myth-ge-crops-reduce-soil-loss>