

Genetically Modified Food

Why we care

Genetically modified crops can be profitable to farmers, but they are weakly regulated and pose risks to the environment and possibly people with allergies. More than 60 countries require labeling or restrictions on GM products. The U.S. does not. GM foods are plants that have had genes from other plants inserted into their genetic coding. More than 80 percent of U.S. corn, soybeans, cotton, and canola, are genetically modified. A common GM technique is to create seeds that will survive weed killers, or to inject pesticides into seeds. However, cross-pollination with wild plants can create “super weeds” that are resistant to weed killers. Pesticides injected into seeds can weaken beneficial insects along with pests. GM crops can also cross-pollinate with organic crops, causing farmers to lose their organic certification, and they threaten crop diversity, the presence of original strains domesticated over thousands of years to thrive under specific conditions. Finally, GM techniques could transfer an allergen from one food to another.

Simple, positive steps to avoid GM foods

- Buy organic. U.S. certified-organic producers are not allowed to use GM seeds. Limit meat and dairy, or find non-GM sources. Animals that provide our meat and dairy were likely fed GM corn and soybeans. To find meat from local pasture-based farms, visit www.eatwild.org.
- Avoid processed foods and vegetable oils made from corn, soybean, cottonseed, and canola (unless labeled organic).
- Select Whole Foods 365-brand products with a non-GMO label or Trader Joe’s store brands.
- For more information, visit the [Center for Food Safety](http://www.cffs.org)’s web site. For a shopper’s guide visit [True Food Now](http://www.truefoodnow.org).

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.