

Nutrition News

Taking A Bite Out Of Genetically Engineered Foods

(NAPSA)—A new food debate has been brought to America's dinner tables: Do we really want genetically engineered foods?

Nutritionists say most Americans don't know the content of what they are eating and that the ingredient labels on many food products are often of little help. That's because food companies are not required to label food products that contain genetically engineered, or GE, ingredients. In fact, many popular processed foods, from breakfast cereals to snack foods, actually contain genetically engineered ingredients, say experts, news that many Americans find a little hard to swallow.

To create these GE foods, some biotech firms mix genes from plants, animals, bacteria, and viruses—and drastically alter other genes—to create food crops destined for American diets that would otherwise never exist in nature. Such genetically engineered ingredients are present in some of the foods people eat and in crop fields across America, despite there having been no long-term studies on the effects of GE on human health or the environment.

While genetically engineered varieties of nearly 50 fruits and vegetables—including apples, oranges, grapefruits, bell peppers, and carrots—are currently undergoing field trials only one has come to market. Opponents of genetically engineered products say if the biotech industry has its way, soon even people's morning coffee could be genetically engineered.

Environmental groups say knowing the facts about genetically engineered food can help people make informed decisions about what they eat and what they feed their families.

Fortunately, say environmentalists, most foods, especially whole foods, are not genetically engineered, and many food producers and retailers are moving



Many Americans now realize they have a choice about genetically engineered foods.

away from GE food.

To help people who don't want to buy or eat genetically engineered food, Greenpeace, a non-profit environmental group, has produced the True Food Guide.

The guide catalogs whole foods that have or have not been genetically engineered, as well as alternatives to experimental GE foods. Some of the categories included in the guide are:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Dry Goods
- Nuts and Seeds

Greenpeace suggests that people who do not want to eat genetically engineered food should be wary of processed foods that contain soy, corn (including corn syrup), or oils from canola or cotton (these are the most widely grown gene-altered crops). The group says consumers can help make a difference by letting their local supermarkets and favorite food companies know they prefer foods made without genetic engineering.

The online True Food Guide lets consumers take action directly from the site www.truefoodnow.org. In addition, the site has over 2,000 food products listed in the guide and its companion publication, the True Food Shopping List.