

**THE DEBATE** : WHAT'S IN OUR FOOD ? / WORK TO PROMOTE OR END GMOs ? / GMO LABELING / USING PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE OR TRUST IN PROCESSING FOOD / A FUTURE WAY TO FEED THE PLANET OR JEOPARDIZING OUR LIVES ?

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## **Seven Things to Tell Your Friends About GMOs**, Posted: 10/25/2012

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Farmers and eaters around the country and the world are watching the Nov. 6 election in California with bated breath\* (holding their breath).

Will **Proposition 37** -- requiring **labeling of GMOs in our food** -- pass? Note that even China requires labeling! But **here in the U.S., GMOs took off in the 1990s with no public debate**, and today they're in most processed foods, making **Americans the world's GMO guinea pigs\*** (for animal studies or tests on animals).

We know it's easy to get sunk\* (to sink) by "information overload"\* (burden) and agribusiness advertising. So far **the largest GMO maker, Monsanto**, and other industry giants have plowed\* (used at large scale) at least \$35 million into keeping us in the dark.

To help us think straight\* (right), we've prepared seven points to consider and share with your friends -- all backed by\* (supported by) **authoritative\*** (serious) **studies**. Here's what they reveal:

**1. GMOs have never undergone standard testing or regulation for human safety.** And now that they're in **70 percent of processed\* (industrial) foods**, it's extremely difficult for scientists **to isolate their health risks**.

**2. But we know that GMOs have proven\* (showed) harmfu\* (bad) in animal studies.** A **2009 review** of 19 studies found mammals\* (animals milking their babies) fed\* (to feed) Ø GM corn or soy **developed "liver and kidney problems"** that could mark the "onset of\* (the beginning of) **chronic diseases**." Most were 90-day studies. In a new **two-year study**, rats fed Ø GM corn developed two to three times **more tumors** -- some bigger than a quarter of their total body weight -- and these tumors appeared much earlier than in rats fed non-GM corn. Among scientists, the study has its defenders and critics, but **even the critics** underscore that we need **more long-term studies**.

**3. And the most widely used GMOs are paired with an herbicide linked to serious health risks.** GM crops -- Roundup Ready soy and corn -- are treated with the herbicide glyphosate, which in exposed humans has been associated with **DNA damage**. In the lab, it's proven **toxic to human liver cells**.

**4. The consequences of GMO technology are inherently unpredictable.** Inserting a single gene can result in multiple, unintended\* (unexpected) **DNA changes and mutations**. "Unintended\* effects are common in all cases where GE [genetic engineering] techniques are used," **warn\* scientists** (to let them know). One such environmental consequence -- **genetic contamination** of other plants -- is already documented. Note that unlike food, once released\* (in contact with) into the environment, seeds can't be "**recalled**"!

**5. GMO makers intimidate and silence farmers and scientists.** GMO corporations use patents and intellectual property rights to **sue farmers, block research, and threaten investigators**. "For a decade," protested *Scientific American* editors in 2009, GMO companies "have explicitly forbidden the use of the seeds for any independent research," so "it is impossible to verify that genetically modified crops perform as advertised."

**6. GMOs undermine\*** (threatens, endanger, jeopardize, damage) **our food security**. Within the biotechnology market, Monsanto alone controls **90 percent** of GE crops worldwide. And Monsanto is one of three GMO companies including DuPont and Syngenta that control **70 percent** of the global seed market, reinforcing monopoly power over our food. GMO seeds are costly and must be purchased every year, so they worsen farmers' **indebtedness, dependency, and vulnerability to hunger**.

**7. GMOs aren't needed in the first place, so why would we take on these risks and harms? Studies**\_show that safe, sustainable\* (responsible) farming practices applied worldwide could increase our food supply as much as 50 percent. And keep in mind that the world's *already* producing **2,800 calories** for every person on earth every day -- more than enough. And that's just with what's left over *after* using half the world's grain for feed, fuel\* (for heating (noun)/ to heat) and other purposes, and wasting one-third of all food. So the urgent question isn't about "more" anyway. It is, How can all of the world's people gain the power to secure healthy\* food (good for health) ? And a good start is knowing what's in our food.

For a cool, just-released animated video devouring the myth that we need industrial agriculture, see [foodmyths.org](http://foodmyths.org).

### **Shopping in the Know (Not GMOs)**

- Avoid processed foods! It's a simple way to reduce exposure to **the four most common GM ingredients**: non-organic forms of soy, canola ???, cottonseed and corn, including high-fructose corn syrup.
- Look for the voluntary "non-GMO" label.
- Buy "certified organic," which ensures that no GMO ingredients were used.
- Visit [www.NonGMOShoppingGuide.com](http://www.NonGMOShoppingGuide.com) for a list of thousands of GMO products and brands.

To sort more food myths from facts, visit the new Food MythBusters: the Real Story About What We Eat website at [FoodMyths.Org](http://FoodMyths.Org). And, if you live in California, vote Nov. 6 for Proposition 37 to require GMO labeling.