

From: DRAKE, LISA M [AG/1000] <lisa.m.drake@monsanto.com>
Sent time: 01/21/2015 11:27:11 AM
To: Folta, Kevin M.
Subject: RE: WebMD process

Thanks, Kevin -- Lisa

From: Folta, Kevin M. [mailto:kfolta@ufl.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 9:00 AM
To: DRAKE, LISA M [AG/1000]
Subject: RE: WebMD process

Lisa, I'm glad to do this and will bounce something off you soon. I'm absolutely slammed and behind on everything. If it gets to the point where you need this done-done, shoot me a note. It's on my list, just not first priority. Let me know when it needs to be.

Kevin

Kevin M. Folta
Professor and Chairman
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"Don't tell me what can't be done. Tell me what needs to be done, and let me do it." – Norman Borlaug.

Illumination (blog) <http://kfolta.blogspot.com>
Twitter @kevinfolta

From: DRAKE, LISA M [AG/1000] <lisa.m.drake@monsanto.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 12:11 AM
To: Folta, Kevin M.
Subject: RE: WebMD process

Kevin: one more thing for your consideration: as you consider writing something, please consider insert the word "labeling" somewhere in the content in order to get search algorithms to pick it up. Thanks again!
Lisa

From: Folta, Kevin M. [mailto:kfolta@ufl.edu]
Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2015 10:32 AM
To: DRAKE, LISA M [AG/1000]
Subject: Re: WebMD process

Can do! My pleasure.

I'm traveling... So if you don't get a timely response please tap me on the shoulder.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 15, 2015, at 10:25 AM, DRAKE, LISA M [AG/1000] <lisa.m.drake@monsanto.com> wrote:

Kevin:

Happy New Year to you! I hope you are well, and able to spend some time at home over the holidays. I have enjoyed monitoring your activity and commentary on Twitter the past several months – I don't know how you have time to do all the things you do, and still do research!

Of course – that won't stop me from asking another favor! This one relates to Web MD. Over the past six months, we have worked hard through third parties to insert fresh and current material on Web MD's website relating to biotechnology health and safety, especially since before that, the material popping up on relation to the topic dredged up highly negative input from Organic Consumers Association and other anti-GMO critics. A recent article on Web MD has improved the search results somewhat (see link), but we understand another way to improve the resources on the website is through bloggers to the website. It is a fairly simple process and I would appreciate your consideration of submitting a blog on the safety and health of biotech to WebMD, if at all possible? The instructions for how to do such a thing are below, and I would be grateful for your consideration of this request.

Best wishes –

Lisa Drake
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Here is the article discussed above:

<http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/features/truth-about-gmos>

Food & Recipes

The Truth About GMOs

By Amy Paturel

WebMD Feature

Reviewed by Jennifer Robinson, MD

If you've eaten today, chances are you've had a food that's been touched by science as well as Mother Nature. Up to 80% of processed foods in the U.S. have something that's been genetically modified (GM), and that number is growing by leaps and bounds. Key crops include corn, soybeans, and cotton. (Yes, cotton products are in foods.)

Scientists tinker with plants for many reasons. They often take a gene that controls a desired trait in one plant -- less need for water, so it can survive a drought, for example -- and insert it into a different plant. The end result: hardier crops, more colorful berries, even seedless watermelons and grapes.

“What that means is, like it or not, genetically modified foods are almost impossible to

avoid,” says Sheldon Krinsky, PhD, an adjunct professor of public health and community medicine at Tufts Medical School in Boston.

The Pros

The World Health Organization, the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Medical Association all say these crops are at least as safe as, and often safer than, foods modified the old-fashioned way, such as through crossbreeding.

In the U.S., three groups play a role in bringing GM products to grocery store shelves. The EPA rates GM plants for environmental safety, the USDA decides whether the plant is safe to grow, and the FDA decides whether the plant is safe to eat.

“They’re the most thoroughly tested food on the market,” says Dan Goldstein, MD, senior science fellow at Monsanto, an agriculture company responsible for a large share of genetically modified crops worldwide.

Those in favor of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) count these among their top selling points:

- **More food:** Genetic engineering helps farmers boost their yield by making crops that can live through a drought or the cold and resist disease. Backers say GM products will help us feed the extra 2 billion people that will fill the planet by 2050. “Not using these tools would push us back 40 to 50 years in food production,” says Kent Bradford, PhD, distinguished professor of plant sciences and director of the Seed Biotechnology Center at the University of California, Davis.
- **Less stress on the environment:** Supporters say biotechnology is better for the planet than older farming methods. Crops built to resist pests lower farmers’ need for toxic chemical pesticides, Goldstein says. They also require less soil to be tilled, reduce runoff, and keep erosion down.
- **Better products:** Scientists can engineer crops to contain vital nutrients. Swiss researchers created a strain of “golden” rice with high amounts of beta-carotene. Monsanto produced soybeans with lots of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Other crops, like papaya and cassava, can be made to withstand disease. “Naturally occurring molds (if we don’t prevent them by creating GM crops) present huge health hazards,” Bradford says. “Why reject a technology that has the potential to benefit so many people worldwide?”

The Cons

Environmental activists, public interest groups, even religious organizations hold that GM foods can [cause allergies](#), make your body resist [antibiotics](#), or even lead to [cancer](#). Independent scientists without a stake on either side see pitfalls to these

high-profit, high-tech products.

Top concerns about GMOs include:

- **The rise of superweeds:** Crops built to withstand herbicides could cross-breed and transfer their genes to weeds. These “superweeds” would also withstand the herbicides. On the other hand, GM fans say this is nothing new. “Even nonchemical technologies create superweeds,” Bradford says.
- **Health problems:** The process often mixes or adds proteins that don’t exist in the original plant. GMO foes fear these will create new allergic reactions. They also worry that foods made to resist disease and viruses will linger in your system after you eat them, and that could make antibiotics less effective. But no studies confirm this claim.
- **"Frankenfood" fears:** The long-term effects of splicing new genes into common crops are still unclear. While the industry and health leaders cite hundreds of studies to support the technology’s safety, not to mention 20 years of animal data, experts like Krimsky claim studies that show bad effects on animals -- like harm to the [kidneys](#), [liver](#), [heart](#), or other organs -- should carry more weight. “The prominent scientists who say the controversy surrounding GMOs has been resolved are dismissing at least 23 studies showing ill effects,” he says. “It has to be a balancing act that weighs the benefits of GMOs against the risks, and that is driven by science, not political pressure or profits.”

The FDA’s only litmus test for safety is based on a policy that says GM foods are close enough to natural foods that they don’t need regulation. “The question is, how can they make that determination?” Krimsky says.

The Right to Know

Whether they think of them as Frankenfoods or a way to feed the world, both sides agree consumers have a right to know what’s in their food. Countries that require labels for GM foods include China, Australia, and the European Union. But the U.S. doesn't make food companies label products with GM ingredients. So it’s no surprise many Americans don’t realize they’re eating them.

The FDA says companies can label foods on their own to say they are or aren’t genetically modified, provided they keep it truthful. But that puts an added burden on farmers to plant, harvest, and ship GM crops separately from non-GM crops. That creates extra cost, which is passed along to the consumer.

Food companies like Nature’s Path and Gerber [baby](#) food choose to use non-GM ingredients. The fast food chain Chipotle removed GM foods from its menu. Whole Foods Market promises to label all GM products at its U.S. and Canadian stores by

2018.

The bottom line: If you live (and eat) in the U.S., unless it's otherwise stated -- or it's certified organic -- it's a safe bet that your food is GM. Makers who don't use GM ingredients clearly say so on labels.

SOURCES:

Dan Goldstein, MD, senior science fellow, Monsanto, St. Louis, MO.

Sheldon Krimsky, PhD, adjunct professor of public health and community medicine, Tufts Medical School, Boston.

Kent Bradford, PhD, Distinguished professor of plant sciences; director, Seed Biotechnology Center, University of California, Davis.

CSA Discovery Guides: "Genetically Modified Foods: Harmful or Helpful?"

FDA: "FDA's Role in Regulating Safety of GE Foods."

Klumper, W. *PLOS ONE*, November 2014.

de Vendomois, J. *International Journal of Biological Sciences*, 2009.

Iowa State University: "The Debate on Labeling Genetically Modified Food."

Brown University: "What is Genetically Modified Food?"

A Review of International Labeling Policies of Genetically Modified Food to Evaluate India's Proposed Rule. 2007.

University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Statewide Biotechnology Workgroup.

California Prop 37: "Right to Know."

Reviewed on December 07, 2014

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... and here is the directions for how to be accepted as a blogger.

Thank you for your interest to become a WebMD Guest Writer or Health Experts, either in community or in blogs. Please write to WebMD Community Management at communitymanagement@webmd.net. Be sure to include your Curriculum Vitae and an explanation as to why you would be a good candidate to work with us here at WebMD.

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Yours in health,

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