

WHY WE NEED MANDATORY GMO FOOD LABELS¹

Alexis Baden-Mayer[©]

- (1) Only 26% of the U.S. public understands that most junk foods and animal products contain GMO ingredients.
- (2) The FDA is moving fast to approve a brave new world of GMO foods, including genetically engineered animals like Frankenfish, the eel-like-ocean-pout-chinook-Atlantic-salmon mix.
- (3) Genetically modified foods are less nutritious, more likely to trigger an allergy, and contain higher levels of growth hormones and pesticides. Yet GM foods aren't required to be rigorously tested for food safety before they end up in grocery stores and restaurants.
- (4) Common genetically modified food ingredients include corn syrup from GM corn, sugar from GM sugar beets, vegetable oils from GM soy, cotton and canola, and cheese, eggs, milk and meat from animals given GM feed or shot up with GM growth hormones and vaccines.
- (5) The same foods that are making people fat, sick, and undernourished are the ones that Monsanto has genetically engineered. High fructose corn syrup, trans-fats, fryer grease, chicken nuggets, and bacon cheese burgers all contain GMOs.
- (6) The industrial-scale mono-crop farms, factory farms and slaughterhouses that are abusing workers and animals, destroying the soil, poisoning the water, polluting the atmosphere with climate-destabilizing greenhouse gases, and creating a breeding ground for mad cow disease, E. coli, salmonella, and swine flu, are the best customers for Monsanto's RoundUp Ready and Bt-spliced crops. Agribusiness thrives off feeding taxpayer subsidized GMO crops, especially corn, soy and cotton seeds, to the chickens, pigs and cows they keep confined in cesspools of their own waste.
- (7) Companies like Monsanto and AquaBounty (the Frankenfish inventor), claim that GMOs are "sustainable" because they're going to feed the world as the global climate crisis accelerates. But genetic engineering companies' business model - mass-marketing techno-fixes for the industrialized food system - only perpetuates the waste and pollution that have already made agriculture the source of at least one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- (8) GMOs can't beat the capacity of organics for restoration, resilience, and abundance. Organic agriculture is the best way to remove billions of tons of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and safely sequester them for centuries in the living soil of organic farms, pastures, and rangelands. If all the world's cropland were transitioned to organic, it would sequester 40% of current greenhouse gas emissions. Organic systems also produce higher yields than GMOs and are more resistant to droughts, floods, diseases and pests.

¹ Organic Consumers Association, Straight to the Source, October 06, 2010

- (9) The organic solution to the climate crisis is threatened by contamination from GMOs. Organic agriculture relies on the diversity and resilience of the thousands of varieties of crops and food animals that humans have cultivated for every soil and climate on Earth. GMOs, also known as "recombinant DNA", are bizarre combinations of foreign genes forcefully inserted into "host organisms" from different species. Once you insert foreign genes into a food crop or animal, these mutant varieties breed and reproduce. These GE mutations are likely permanent, meaning that it is only a matter of time before natural and organic varieties are contaminated with GMO traits.
- (10) GMO contamination could lead to the collapse of the industrialized food system. GMOs have the capacity to break the species barrier. Weeds that plague row crops have adopted the RoundUp Ready trait, creating super-weeds that are forcing farmers to turn to greater amounts of super-toxic herbicides and pesticides. The overuse of RoundUp, the most widely-used pesticide in the history of agriculture, enhances the virulence of pathogens such as Fusarium and may have dire consequences for agriculture such as rendering soils infertile, crops non-productive, and plants less nutritious.