

To build trust, scientists should be fighting for transparency, not against labels

“I’m certain that fighting [labeling] is not where the scientific community should be putting its energy,” writes Dan Fagin, journalism professor and director of NYU’s Science, Health and Environmental Reporting program, in *Scientific American*.

In his essay, Fagin notes that when Monsanto and some scientists fight labeling propositions, consumers lose trust and “assume the worst,” despite the fact that GMOs have been proven to be just as safe as any conventionally bred crop.

Scientists who spend their time fighting labeling also risk eroding their standing with a distrustful public, especially those in the middle who are suspicious of GMOs but may yet be persuaded the technology is worthwhile—unless they sense that information is being withheld from them. Transparency is a hallmark of good science (and good journalism), but when we push for more of it only when it benefits us directly, yet oppose the types of disclosure the public overwhelmingly wants, we look like hypocrites or worse.

Instead of fighting labeling, Fagin argues, scientists should be working to increase public awareness about the benefits of genetic engineering, such as nutrient-fortification, pesticide-resistance or severe weather resistance. While he disagrees with the mandatory labeling policy itself, he is optimistic that labeling can do more good than harm for biotechnology as a whole.

For all their shortcomings, label laws would at least partially disarm the conspiracy theorists and nudge the mainstream debate in the right direction: toward a clear-eyed, case-by-case discussion of the costs and benefits of specific GMOs.

Read the full, original story here: [“Why We Should Accept GMO Labels”](#)

Additional Resources:

- “Why we need to label GMOs,” Mark Lynas Blog