Labels could disarm the emotional and political triggers of GMOs

Grist's Nathanael Johnson examines the complex issue of labeling, outline some of the numerous problems and some of what he believes are its potential benefits. He notes there are specific problems Washington's labeling initiative, which puts a large label on the front of the product–European countries note GMOs as part of the ingredients list–but concludes that labeling in general might do more good than harm.

> In a famous paper on risk perception, published in *Science* in 1987, Paul Slovic pointed out that people judge voluntary, controllable actions as much less risky than those that are involuntary and out of their control. Similarly, people see the unknown as much more risky than the known. Genetically engineered foods are, for most people, both unknown and uncontrollable.
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> There's a simple, almost magical, solution to both these problems: labeling. Labeling makes the unknown known; it puts people in control of what is currently uncontrollable. It removes dread fear from the debate. Once GM food is labeled, the risk that people ascribe to it should drop precipitously. People see voluntary hazards (like skiing) as 1,000 times more acceptable than hazards they are forced to accept, Slovic wrote.

Read the full, original story here: "GMO labeling: Trick or treat?"