

How should Congress and the FDA respond to calls to label foods with GMOs?

According to Henry I. Miller, a physician and the founding director of the Office of Biotechnology at the FDA, and Drew L. Kershen, a Professor of Law at the University of Oklahoma College of Law, although the majority of labeling proposals have not been approved, “the food, farm and agribusiness industries are tired of fighting these endless brush fires.” Their solution, however, “is facile and even worrisome.”

Food companies and farm organizations have created the [Coalition for Safe Affordable Food](#) (CFSAF), which is lobbying for federal legislation with four goals:

- *Eliminate confusion and uncertainty* caused by the prospect of a 50-state patchwork of safety and labeling laws for genetically engineered food, by affirming that Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is the definitive national authority.
- *Additional regulation* – require the FDA to conduct a safety review of all new genetically engineered traits before they are introduced into commerce.
- *Inform Consumers*. The FDA would establish federal standards for companies that want to label their product voluntarily to indicate the absence or presence of food ingredients produced with molecular genetic engineering techniques.
- *Provide Consistency*. The FDA would define the term “natural” for use on food and beverage products so that food and beverage companies and consumers have a consistent legal framework that will guide food labels and inform consumer choice.

The authors conclude:

CFSAF's goals are understandable, but in pursuing them the coalition needs to balance science, common sense, and the reality of congressional illogic and unpredictability. CFSAF – and Congress — must ensure that by singling out one technology for relief from harassment, their actions do not perpetuate the myth that genetic engineering is some sort of homogenous “category” amenable to generalizations. It is not, and legislation that treats it as such, even with the best intentions, would be misguided and subject to a more magisterial influence: the Law of Unintended Consequences.

Read the full original article: [A Faustian Bargain On Labeling Genetically Engineered Food](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Dr. Oz again takes on the GMO controversy again—Science or myth?](#), Genetic Literacy Project
- [St. Louis Post-Dispatch editorial backs labeling but not over health concerns](#), St. Louis Post Dispatch
- [Shoppers who want organic products don't need new GMO labels](#), Washington Times