

Parsing ‘anti-science’ argument of GMO proponents

Currently, labeling foods containing GMOs is purely voluntary. The [Non-GMO Project](#) coordinates an effort to label foods that do not contain GMOs. Also, foods that are labeled “organic” do not contain GMOs. The FDA supports *voluntary* labeling only, not mandatory labeling.

GMO critics say that voluntary labeling is not enough. Some say that GMOs may contain toxins or allergens. They point out that GMOs are in so many foods that it is almost impossible to avoid them. They want *mandatory* labels so that people can more easily decide for themselves if they want to eat food that contains GMOs.

GMO proponents, on the other hand, say that GMOs have been proven safe, so labels are unneeded—and unscientific.

For example, the [American Association for the Advancement of Science \(AAAS\) states](#) that “crop improvement by the modern molecular techniques of biotechnology is safe” and that labels are “meant to alarm.” [The Genetic Literacy Project’s Jon Entine cautions](#) against the anti-science views of anti-GMO NGOs. A [well-cited poll by the PEW Research Center](#) shows that the views of scientists and non-scientists diverge on a number of issues, including GMOs, climate change, evolution, among other topics.

It is true that some GMO critics go too far. Calling GMOs “Frankenfood” is simply a scare tactic; that genetically engineered food is “unnatural” is neither here nor there. Not all that is unnatural is unsafe (think life-saving drugs) and not all that is natural is safe (think naturally occurring poisons).

But is it really anti-science to raise any concerns about GMOs?

In short, no. It is a mistake to lump together climate change deniers, evolution deniers, and GMO critics, in part because the reasons for doubt in each case are different and in part because the so-called “precautionary principle” would incline us to accept climate change while rejecting GMOs. More specifically, I have identified six problems with the claim that GMO critics are anti-science.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [GMOs? Not So Fast](#)