

Why ‘GMO-free’ and ‘antibiotic-free’ are worlds apart

Poultry giant Foster Farms [announced](#) it would cut back on the antibiotics it feeds to its chickens. This follows similar promises from Tyson Foods and Pilgrim’s Pride, the top two poultry processors in the United States. (Foster Farms is number 10.) Meanwhile, restaurants such as McDonald’s and Chick-fil-A have pledged to serve McNuggets and Chick-n-Strips made from chickens fed fewer antibiotics.

It’s a veritable trend! In fact, it reminds us of another trend—the one against GMO foods. [Chipotle](#) became emblematic of that movement last month, when it promised it would go GMO-free, a first for a restaurant chain. But there’s one major difference between the movement against agricultural antibiotics and the one against GMOs: There’s much more science to back the former, making the latter look like little more than a PR move. As NPR’s “The Salt” [recently noted](#), Chipotle is trying to have its cake and eat it, too: It won’t officially acknowledge that GMOs are unhealthy to eat, yet its [website](#) seems pretty clear on wanting to stoke consumers’ fears.

The problem with feeding animals antibiotics is that the over-use of those medicines makes them less effective in treating not just animals, but sick people, too. And we’re not talking about some small-scale incident: Antibiotic-resistant illnesses kill 23,000 Americans a year, according to a 2013 estimate by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Not all of these illnesses are a result of farm practices, but there’s scientific evidence that at least some are.

Contrast all this to the evidence for the harms of eating genetically modified foods. One recent [analysis](#) of peer-reviewed GMO safety tests, including 770 studies that had to do with animal and human health, found that “the scientific research conducted so far has not detected any significant hazards directly connected with the use of GE crops.”

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [What’s the Difference Between Antibiotic-Free and GMO-Free?](#)