

Organic label does not guarantee food is GMO or pesticide free

New York Times nutrition and health columnist Jane Brody recently penned a generally good [piece](#) about genetic engineering, “Fears, Not Facts, Support GMO-Free Food.” She recapitulated the overwhelming evidence for the importance and safety of products from GMOs, or “genetically modified organisms.”

Brody’s article had two errors, however. One error by Brody occurred in the very last words of the piece, “the best way for concerned consumers to avoid G.M.O. products is to choose those certified as organic, which the U.S.D.A. requires to be G.M.O.-free.” Brody has fallen victim to a common misconception; in fact, the USDA does not require organic products to be GMO-free.

Organic standards are wholly arbitrary, owing more to the dogma of an atavistic religious cult than to science or common sense. And whatever their merit, as a [December 2014 report](#) in the *Wall Street Journal* described, the standards are not being enforced very effectively: “40% of 81 certifiers have been flagged by the USDA for conducting incomplete inspections; 16% of certifiers failed to cite organic farms’ potential use of banned pesticides and antibiotics; and 5% failed to prevent potential commingling of organic and nonorganic products.”

Additionally, so long as an organic farmer abides by his organic system (production) plan—a plan that an organic certifying agent must approve before granting the farmer organic status—the unintentional presence of GMOs at any level does not affect the organic status of the farmer’s products or farm.

The bottom line is that buying “certified organic” products doesn’t guarantee that they will be free of genetically engineered ingredients.

We concur with the title of Brody’s article: “Fears, Not Facts, Support GMO-Free Food.”

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Fanaticism, Pragmatism And Organic Agriculture](#)