First GM flu vaccine granted US government approval

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

The FDA has now officially approved the first flu vaccine created with genetically modified materials, and more are on the way.

The new vaccine, Flublok, is the first flu vaccine to contain genetically modified (GM) proteins derived from insect cells. Developers say the vaccine contains recombinant DNA technology and an insect virus known as baculovirus that is purported to help facilitate the more rapid production of vaccines.

Flublok is produced by extracting cells from the fall armyworm, a type of caterpillar, and genetically altering them to produce large amounts of hemagglutinin, a flu virus protein that enables the flu virus itself to enter the body quickly.

Protein Sciences advises that Flublok is not recommended for elderly patients, pregnant women, children or nursing mothers.

The vaccine was found to be less than 45 percent effective at preventing the flu (44.6 percent efficacy rate in one trial and 44.8 percent in another).

Current flu vaccines are created using hundreds of millions of chicken eggs in a process that takes up to six months and is often unsuccessful. The new GM flu vaccines hope to speed up this process — and make it much cheaper for vaccine manufacturers.

It should be noted that many current vaccines and medicines already contain genetically modified ingredients. Gardisil, Cervarix, the Rotavirus vaccine and the Hepatitis B vaccine all contain GMOs.

Read full, original post: FDA approves GMO flu vaccine