

Organic farmers push for county ordinances establishing ‘genetic engineering-free’ zones

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

Jackson County, Oregon, has just joined the small but growing ranks of “GE-free zones” in the U.S., which prohibit the cultivation of genetically engineered (GE) crops. It’s at least the eighth county in the country to create such an ordinance, and efforts are springing up to pass similar measures in other places. . .

. . .when it comes to GE-free farming zones, the concern is largely an economic one. The goal of creating the zones, according to proponents, is to protect non-GE crops from contamination with modified product — a risk they argue has become a threat to the livelihood of traditional and organic farmers.

This is a concern on several levels — first, because of federal patent laws protecting the right to produce and sell certain genetically modified organisms, said Elise Higley, a Jackson County-based farmer and executive director of the [Our Family Farms Coalition](#), an advocacy group for traditional farming which helped spearhead the Jackson County ordinance. . .

Beyond the legal considerations, there’s also worry about having contaminated products rejected by domestic organic markets, which advertise their wares as being GE-free, Higley said. . .

In addition to Jackson County, five counties in California, and at least one in Washington, Hawaii and another in Oregon, have enacted similar ordinances, and more may be on the way. . .

But such regulations are not likely to occur uncontested. . .

Read full, original post: [Around the country, organic farmers are pushing for ‘GE-free’ zones](#)