

One percent of U.S. organic farmers reported economic losses due to GMO commingling

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U.S retailers are seeking additional assurance that foods labeled organic and other non-GE [genetically engineered] foods contain little or no GE material. Many processors, manufacturers, and retailers now require the use of avoidance protocols and testing and have independently set tolerance levels for the unintended presence of GE traits. . . .Maintaining the integrity of GE-differentiated markets relies on practices such as buffer strips to isolate identity-preserved crops from nearby GE crops and product segregation throughout the supply chain.

This report synthesizes data on all three GE-differentiated sectors and compares their magnitudes in terms of U.S. crop production. It also examines the practices used by organic and non-GE producers to avoid the unintended presence of GE material in their product streams, and discusses the economic impacts when GE material is detected in organic crops.

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Among the challenges of organic and conventional non-GE corn and soybean production is preventing accidental comingling with GE crops and pollen in order to protect price premiums. The top practices that help reduce the risk of comingling include the use of buffer strips, which also reduce the risk of pesticide drift. . . .Many organic corn producers delay planting to reduce the likelihood that their crops pollinate at the same time as nearby GE crops. . . . While delayed planting helps prevent the comingling of GE and non-GE pollen, it may also lower yields.

In 2014, 1 percent of all U.S. certified organic farmers in 20 States reported that they experienced economic losses (amounting to \$6.1 million. . .) due to GE comingling during 2011-2014. The percentage . . . would be higher if calculated only for those organic farmers growing the nine crops with a GE counterpart. . . .

Read full, original post: Economic Issues in the Coexistence of Organic, Genetically Engineered (GE), and Non-GE Crops