

Sonoma Co. considers ban on GMO cultivation, wine growers concerned

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

One of the most contentious political issues in Sonoma County history is likely to come before voters again in November: whether the county should impose a ban on genetically modified crops and seeds over consumer health concerns.

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Proponents say they are advancing a revised initiative now because they feel the political landscape has improved their chances, with greater public awareness of the debate surrounding GMO foods. Mendocino, Marin, Trinity, Humboldt and Santa Cruz counties have enacted similar bans on GMO crops and seeds.

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But grape growers responsible for the county's \$445 million crop . . . have argued that a ban on altered crops could limit their ability to battle threats such as Pierce's disease, which is spread by insects and can kill vines.

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Kim Vail, executive director of the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, said the group hasn't yet taken a formal position on the proposed ballot measure since it has yet to be certified for the election. The group helped spearhead opposition to the 2005 initiative.

"In general, we view biotechnology as another tool that we can use to help the quality and marketability of our products," Vail said.

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The proposed "Transgenic Contamination Prevention Ordinance" for Sonoma County would make it unlawful for people or entities of any kind to "propagate, cultivate, raise or grow genetically engineered organisms."

Hudson said the ordinance would not prevent the sale or purchase of genetically engineered food or seed, or forbid medical treatment for humans or animals using altered vaccines or medications.

The measure also wouldn't prevent research into genetically modified organisms within the county as long as it was conducted in secure labs, Hudson said.

Read full, original post: [Ban on GMO crops sought again for Sonoma County](#)