

## Boulder County's ban of GMOs on public land based on 'values' not public health concerns

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

Recently. . . we reversed the 2011 policy that allowed the planting of genetically-modified organism (or GMO) corn and sugar beets on county-owned croplands, and directed staff to develop a phase-out plan . . . Given the intense community interest and divided opinion on this topic, we want to explain why.

Some argue transitioning away from GMOs is anti-science, given that many studies have shown no definitive public health risk. Let us be clear: Our decision was not based on the belief that all genetic engineering is in and of itself harmful. Indeed, in some cases, benefits, e.g., drought resistance, could outweigh potential risks.

At the heart of our decision was a key policy question: Should public lands be managed to achieve public benefits commensurate with the significant investment of public tax dollars that acquired those lands? Or should the county let private lessees farm our 16,000 acres of public croplands however they like?

We concluded that our taxpayer-owned agricultural open space does play a distinct role from private farmland and should be managed according to Boulder County's values. . . . Boulder County should similarly strive to be a national leader in sustainable agriculture. In our view, the current GMO cropping system does not achieve this high standard.

Our concerns are about supporting a cropping system involving seeds genetically engineered to partner with toxic pesticides. Counter to integrated pesticide management, which uses chemicals only as a last resort, these GMOs guarantee continued use of synthetic chemicals, particularly glyphosate.

**Read full, original post:** [Elise Jones and Deb Gardner: GMO phase-out is faithful to Boulder County values](#)