

Harvard's Cass Sunstein questions how USDA will justify cost of GMO labeling

In a forthcoming paper, [Harvard Law School](#) Professor and former OIRA Administrator [Cass Sunstein](#) [argues](#) that USDA will face a significant challenge in presenting the costs and benefits that justify mandatory labeling for GMOs.

. . . .

Although determining the costs of mandatory labeling of GMOs will be, on the whole, fairly straightforward, the process is likely to be [contentious](#). ...[C]osts to the consumer, such as the loss of enjoyment from discovering that their favorite food contains GMOs, are difficult to [ascertain](#). However, because the cost of reading the label is unlikely to be very high, Sunstein [suggests](#) that USDA could provide an upper or lower bound for the cost, or simply assert that the cost will not be large.

[Determining](#) the benefits of mandatory GMO labeling will be a much more difficult endeavor.

Clashing with general public opinion, the scientific community, is in general agreement that foods containing GMOs do not [present](#) greater health risks than foods with no GMOs, although that consensus is not without [challenge](#)

In fact, Sunstein argues that using health concerns to justify GMO labeling could end up being a disservice to consumers. Doing so could [reinforce](#) misconceptions about the safety of GMOs. Instead, [says](#) Sunstein, USDA should aim to clarify the health standing of foods containing GMOs.

Given the general scientific consensus that GMOs present no health risks, USDA may have to rely on [addressing](#) ecological concerns—for instance, “threats to nontarget organisms ... and threats to biodiversity”—to justify GMO labeling. However, Sunstein does not [think](#) this will be an easy task.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [The Uncertain Benefits of GMO Labeling](#)