

Many consumers mistakenly believe organic and non-GMO labels are interchangeable

[Editor's Note: Jayson Lusk is a food and agricultural economist and head of the Agricultural Economics Department at Purdue University.]

An organic seal on a product should already convey to consumers that the ingredients came from a process that excluded GMOs. However, the very presence of [a new] label suggests many consumers may not be aware of this fact.

I have a paper with Brandon McFadden forthcoming in [the] journal *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*.... In the paper, we delve into this issue and others. Here's part of the motivation.

It appears that organic organizations are concerned that consumers perceive non-GM and organic labels to be substitutes. Although many organic food companies supported the general idea of mandatory labeling, now that the policy has passed, organic producers have expressed concern that non-GM verification may be perceived as a substitute for the more expensive and encompassing organic certification.... Despite these concerns, little is known about the extent to which the two most common non-GM labels, USDA Organic and Non-GMO Project, are demand substitutes or complements.

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Because it is more costly to be organic than non-GMO (since the latter is a subset of the former), it is easy to see why many food companies would want to add the additional label that "Organic is non-GMO and more".

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Are organic and non-GMO labels substitutes or complements?](#)