

European consumers think non-GMO, other 'free-from' labeled foods are healthier

Free-from labelled foods seem healthier, with GM-free and palm oil-free labels having the strongest effect, according to a study of almost 2000 French, Swedish, British and Polish individuals.

The researchers, from Switzerland's ETH Zurich and the Brussels-based European Food Information Council, wanted to find out how various free-from labels – lactose-free, gluten-free, GM-free and palm oil-free – shape perceptions of foods.

They found that products bearing a free-from label were considered healthier than products without such a label, with the strongest effects occurring for labels indicating that products were free of GMOs and free of palm oil.

However, the more nutritionally informed an individual was, the smaller the 'health halo' effect was.

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Not all nationalities had the same free-from perceptions. Both Polish and French participants saw GMO-free GM products as healthier compared with Swedish and British respondents....

Perhaps unsurprisingly, French respondents were most receptive to palm-oil free and GM-free claims. The GM researchers suggested this may be due to French government policy. "Public debate and negative media coverage [in France] as well as the contemplated tax ban on palm oil and restrictive regulation of GMO in food and GM crops could be drivers of the negative image these ingredients have in the French consumer sample," they wrote.

[Editor's note: Read the [full study](#) (behind paywall)]

Read full, original post: [Free-from foods are seen as healthier – especially GM-free and palm oil-free: study](#)