

Viewpoint: USDA's friendly 'bioengineered' food label could help undo anti-GMO activists' stigmatization

Though anti-GMO activists have long pushed labeling as a way to stigmatize genetically modified foods, America's draft proposal for labeling such products deftly diffuses that effort with new language and friendly-looking symbols.

Two commonly used terms — genetically engineered and genetically modified — would be abandoned in favor of the new phrase "bioengineered" (BE), according to the [US Department of Agriculture's proposed rule](#) for implementing a mandatory food labeling law that was adopted two years ago.

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The proposal, which is [open for public comment through July 3](#), is likely to draw the ire of activist groups that have invested years of campaigning effort in demonizing the term "GMO." Companies like the Non-GMO Project, meanwhile, have built a brisk business by certifying that foods do not contain transgenic material using a standard much narrower than the proposed labeling rules. They may stand to lose business if "GMO" ceases to be a relevant consumer term.

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In keeping with the USDA's desire to avoid turning the labeling requirement into a warning, the proposed "BE" symbols range from smiley faces to a bucolic representation of blue skies, bright sun and green land.

Read full, original post: [USDA labeling proposal diffuses GMO stigma](#)