

Bangladesh will mandate GMO labeling to quell consumer 'distrust' of crop biotechnology

Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) is planning on making declaration of genetically-modified (GM) [crops] in food products mandatory, said its chairman [Feb. 25].

A genetically modified organism, or GMO, is an organism that has had its DNA altered or modified in some way through genetic engineering. In most cases, GMOs have been altered with DNA from another organism, be it a bacterium, plant, virus or animal; these organisms are sometimes referred to as "transgenic" organisms.

There is a huge distrust amongst the public about the safety of GMO crops.

"Every product, be it packaged, processed or imported, must have a declaration stating whether this is GM or not. We will issue a directive in this regard soon," said BFSA Chairman (in charge) Manbub Kabir.

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The law makes it mandatory for GM food labels to declare their identities but it was being flouted at the marketing stage, said BFSA Member Monzur Morshed Ahmed.

"Labeling requirements established by regulations are currently being sidestepped," he said, adding that consumers should be ensured an enabling environment allowing them to pick out what they want and do not.

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No adverse effect has been seen for the GM foods that have been approved since 1996.

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