

Viewpoint: ‘No added hormones’? How food labels can be technically accurate but still misleading

Terms like ‘GMO-free’ and ‘raised without hormones or antibiotics’ are just some of the labels used on food products, and those in the agricultural industry are hoping to help consumers make informed food choices.

In Canada, growth hormones are approved for use in beef cattle only — meaning that any pork, poultry, or dairy product advertising ‘no added hormones’ is required to include a disclaimer informing consumers that all products from that species do not have added hormones.

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An increasing number of food labelers are choosing to advertise their products as free from genetic modification (GMO-free), yet some of the foods being advertised as such may not have a genetically modified counterpart.

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Marketing strategies of certain varieties, like being raised without hormones or genetic modification, has caused some to question how their food is produced.

[Agribusiness assistant Christine] Suominen said consumers should abide by an old agricultural adage — ask a farmer.

“I really wish that consumers would trust farmers, I think that there is a lot of science behind what they do and I think a lot of them are very well, especially in our day and age, they’re very well educated,” she said.

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