

**Will We Label the Truth
or Unlabel Misconceptions?**

Should products be labeled based on GMO content?

State Event: June 7, 2017

Madisonville North Hopkins FFA Chapter

(270) 825-6017

4515 Hanson Road
Madisonville, KY 42431

Issue Summary

Introduction:

When you arrive at the grocery store, you are quickly bombarded with various marketing strategies as producers use speciality labels to better promote their products. In recent news, one product label has caught public attention. This label is the one stating whether or not a product contains a genetically modified organism.

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have been produced for over two decades (*Janabi, 2014*), and consumer awareness of these organisms has reached an all time high. As a result, many consumers are demanding products be labeled based on their GM content. With the countless misconceptions surrounding the topic, there is much debate as to whether or not labeling these products would be a benefit or detriment.

Currently there is legislation in place requiring that foods containing GMOs be labeled in some way. This was signed by President Barack Obama, as part of the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015. This bill amended previous versions of legislation from allowing this process to be voluntary, to now forcing it to be mandatory. However, food companies are still given choice when selecting how they will label these foods. This includes specific wording on packaging, a USDA generated symbol, a 1-800 number for consumers to call, or a QR code providing more information about the GM contents (*Pompeo, 2015*).

Intracurricular Connection:

In various agricultural courses taught at Madisonville North Hopkins High School, students are taught about these GMOs and how they have impacted agriculture since conception. In Principles of Agriscience, freshmen are taught the history of agriculture and take a glimpse at how GMOs have made a global impact. They have looked at how Golden Rice, rice enhanced with beta-carotene (*Mayer, 2015*), has saved lives in developing countries. These students later design potential GMO products that could be used to fix a food or agricultural need.

This year in Agriscience, sophomore through senior students were introduced with the concept of GMO product labeling. This topic was related to consumer purchases based on how their foods were produced. Students were divided on the concept, having researched both the benefits and implications of this issue.

Arguments Against GMO Labeling:

Though people are becoming more aware that GMOs are out there, they are not staying well informed on the topic itself. According to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the conclusion that GMOs are safe is a belief shared by over 89 percent of scientist. That same study stated that 57 percent of average consumers believe GMOs are unsafe to eat (*Entine, 2015*). With invalid research studies such as the Seralini study and countless incorrect publications about GMOs on social media, it is easy to see why consumers are misguided on the health risk associated with GMOs.

As a result, some believe that labeling products based on GMO content would only further misguide consumers by giving a negative stigma to an already misunderstood topic. With the statistics used earlier, that 57 percent of people would avoid any products labeled as GMO. With over 80 percent of our products containing some type of GMO commodity (*Kelly, 2012*), that group of individuals could substantially change the face of American agricultural.

Globally we have seen countless benefits in production because of GMOs. According to the American Council on Science and Health, research was conducted from the Georg-August-University of Goettingen in Germany that analyze the impacts of GM crops on a global scale. When concluded, this study showed that globally these crops increased yields by 22 percent, farmer profits increased by 68 percent, and a decrease in chemical pesticide usage by 37 percent. With a population predicted to reach over 9 billion people in the year 2050, a shift in focus causing us to revert to non-GM crop varieties would decrease the chances overcoming this future obstacle (*Hakim, 2014*).

Arguments Supporting GMO Labeling:

While it may lead to downsides for producers of GMOs by reducing demand for those commodities, those who produce non-GMO products may see great benefit from this type of labeling. Having a GMO label would allow people to express their preferences when selecting food for their families. This concept is already seen with labels such as Kentucky Proud.

Kentucky Proud is a label provided by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, used on products produced by the hard working men and women of the Bluegrass State. This label does not signify that those products are healthier, safer, nor better for consumers. Instead, it simply allows those who prefer to shop local to purchase foods that match their personal preferences.

When looking at this issue on a global scale, labeling foods based on GM content may lead to more opportunities for export. As of 2016, there were over 60 countries that require food labeling (*J. L., 2016*). Some of these countries have restrictions on food they import due to limitations of GMO use. By labeling our products as GMO, we would not be removing these crops from our production, but instead giving more opportunity for non-GMO producers to market their products on a global scale.

Conclusion:

After conducting countless research, many benefits and implications have been discovered about this topic. With valid arguments from both sides of the fence, this debate will no doubt go on for generations to come. Should we limit the backlash and confusion of consumers by leaving GMO content off the label? Should we make this information available to consumers who desire this valuable knowledge concerning the products they purchase? There we are left with the issue: Should products be labeled based on genetically modified content?

Bibliography

Janabi, F (2014, March 02). History of Genetic Modification Retrieved April 12, 2017, from <https://gmoanswers.com/ask/how-long-have-genetically-modified-foods-been-used>

Pompeo, M. (2015, July 24). H.R.1599 - 114th Congress (2015-2016): Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015. Retrieved April 17, 2017, from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1599/>

Mayer, J (2015). Golden Rice Project. Retrieved April 17, 2017, from http://goldenrice.org/Content1-Who/who2_history.php

Entine, J. (2015, January 29). AAAS Scientists: Consensus on GMO Safety Firmer Than For Human-Induced Climate Change. Retrieved April 17, 2017, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jon-entine/post_8915_b_6572130.html

Kelly, M. (2012, October 30). Top 7 Genetically Modified Crops. Retrieved April 17, 2017, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/margie-kelly/genetically-modified-food_b_2039455.html

Hakim, D. (2014, November 6). Meta-Analysis Shows GM Crops Reduce Pesticide use by 37 Percent. Retrieved April 17, 2017, from <http://acsh.org/news/2014/11/06/meta-analysis-shows-gm-crops-reduce-pesticide-use-37-percent>

J. L. (2016). Labeling Around the World. Retrieved May 10, 2017, from <http://www.justlabelit.org/right-to-know-center/labeling-around-the-world/>

Documentation of Local Forums

Teacher Presentation

The students presented their presentation to a select group of teachers and school staff. Two of the individuals were very familiar with the topic of GMO product labeling; one teaches this in her AP Environmental Sciences course, while the other is a part-time farmer who prefers to raise non-GMO products. The other two staff involved did not have much background on the topic. One teaches debate at the school, helping provide feedback to our overall presentation. The other is heavily involved in filling out various applications for the school, helping assist the group's portfolio.

❖ **Teachers/Staff Involved:**

Mrs. Maria Bailey

➤ *Science/AP Environmental Science Teacher*

Mr. Eric Crabtree

➤ *Visual Arts Teacher/Part-Time Farmer*

Mr. Brandon Poole

➤ *English/Debate Teacher*

Ms. Lori Vanover

➤ *Guidance Counselor*

❖ **Location:** Madisonville North Hopkins High School - *Library*

4515 Hanson Road
Madisonville, KY 42431

❖ **Date and Time:** April 26, 2017 at 3:00 pm

Documentation of Local Forums

Hopkins County Farm Bureau Board of Directors

The students presented their presentation to the Hopkins County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. They gave this presentation at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting. This group consisted of various agricultural leaders in Hopkins County.

❖ List of Directors in Attendance:

- Mr. Curtis Dame - *Agriculture Extension Agent*
- Mr. Danny Peyton - *Hopkins County Farm Bureau President*
- Mr. Mark Metcalfe - *Greenhouse Owner/Hopkins County Farm Bureau Treasurer*
- Dr. Johnny Brown - *Local Grain Farmer/Dentist*
- Mr. Travis Ipo - *Farm Bureau Branch Manager*
- Mr. Jarrett Brown - *Farm Bureau Branch Manager*
- Mr. David Brumfield - *Hopkins County Farm Bureau Secretary*
- Mr. Thomas Porter - *Local Grain Farmer*
- Mrs. Sue Jones - *Farm Bureau Women's Chair*
- Mr. Tony Holloway - *District Farm Bureau Manager*
- Ms. Ashley Buckman - *Farm Bureau Office Secretary*
- Mr. Shawn Brumfield - *Hopkins County Farm Bureau Vice-President*

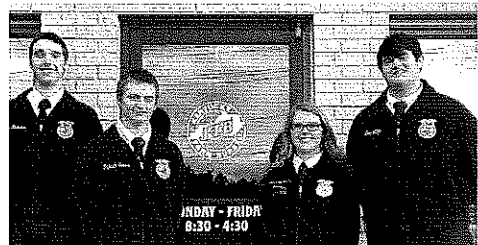
❖ Location: Hopkins County Farm Bureau Office - Conference Room

585 Nebo Road
Madisonville, KY 42431

❖ Date and Time: May 1, 2017 at 6:00 pm

❖ Additional Proof:

- Picture of the students with the Hopkins County Farm Bureau Officers and picture from outside of the Farm Bureau Office
- Minutes from of the Monthly Meeting, highlighting the inclusion of the FFA presentation



Hopkins County Farm Bureau Federation Monthly Board Meeting
May 1st, 2017

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Danny Peyton

Members present:

Danny Peyton, President	Ashlee Buckman	Jarrett Brown	Curtis Dame
Mark Metcalfe	Johnny Brown	David Brumfield	Sue Jones
Brian Welch	Travis Ipox	Thomas Porter Jr.	Tony Holloway
Shawn Brumfield			

Prayer – Mark Metcalfe

Pledge – Danny Peyton

★ FFA attended the meeting and presented a presentation about GMO product labeling to the board members. This was part of a contest called the Agricultural Issues Forum.

Treasurer Report:

- *Motion:** File Treasurer Report for May meeting
- *Vote:** Motion carried
- *Resolved:** Treasurer Report filed

Approval of minutes:

- *Motion:** Approve minutes from May board meeting
- *Vote:** Motion carried
- *Resolved:** Minutes from May meeting approved without modifications

Old Business:

- Kyle Bratcher will be the County's applicant for Institute for Agricultural Leaders (IFAL) Program.
- Annual Meeting date set for September 1st
- Policy development suggestion has been sent.

New Business:

- 2018 AFBF Annual Convention deadline is May 24th.
- David and Linda Brumfield will be registering for the Roadside Farm Market Tour.
- 2017 Farmer of the Year deadline July 1st.
- Hopkins County Scholarship recipients are: Sarah Lutz, Mya DeHay, Irelande Enoch
- Young Farmer Summer Outing- July 13-15
- John C. Hendricks Beef Tour- June 26-30
- Teacher Workshop- deadline June 1st
- New Member Report passed around

***Motion:** Adjourn meeting

***Vote:** Motion carried

***Resolved:** Meeting adjourned at 7:24 by President, Danny Peyton

Documentation of Local Forums

Monsanto Representatives

Students presented their presentation to various Monsanto representatives at the headquarters of Monsanto in Saint Louis, Missouri. These included seed salespersons, geneticist, and those who test Monsanto products. This presentation allowed students the opportunity to collaborate with individuals who work with GMOs on a daily basis, helping prepare students with both staying informed on their topic and learning concerns these individuals hear from those they encounter.

❖ **List of Representatives in Attendance:**

- Mike Chalfant
- Dipal Chaudhari
- Walter Mayhew
- Rebecca Waller
- Jared Webb
- Kirby Green

❖ **Location:** Headquarters of Monsanto - *Meeting Room*

800 North Lindbergh Blvd
St Louis, MO 63167

❖ **Date and Time:** May 23, 2017 at 10:00 am

❖ **Additional Proof:**

- Email communication from Monsanto representatives finalizing the visit

GREEN, KIRBY [AG/1000] <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com>

Wed 4/5/2017 4:39 PM

To: Welch, Brian <brian.welch@hopkins.kyschools.us>;

2 attachments (350 KB)

Kirby Green - Madisonville North Hopkins FFA STEM & Meetings.ics; Chesterfield Directions;

FYI

Kirby L. Green
DeKalb & Asgrow
270-[REDACTED]



From: GILLAM, CLAUDIA [AG/1000]
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 2:48 PM
To: GREEN, KIRBY [AG/1000] <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com>
Cc: SMITHALLEN, ELLEN F [AG-Contractor/1000] <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com>
Subject: Kirby Green - 05/23/17 - Madisonville North Hopkins FFA STEM & Meetings

Hi, Kirby! I touched based with Ellen this afternoon and here are the details:

Tuesday – May 23, 2017

Meeting Room: AA1215 (Chesterfield / AA Building / AA Public Conference) – Holds 22

Agenda (Central Time):

10:00 am – Arrive Chesterfield (directions attached and will be on final agenda) & Begin Presentations

11:45 am – Lunch (AA to order via Enterprise System)

1:00 pm- 2:45 pm – Chesterfield Tour & Depart

of Attendees: 6 (plus maybe 3 MON)

Since we do not have a MON host (you) attending, could one of the **available "speakers" stay with the group and eat lunch with them?** Once the tour starts, there will be a MON employee with them, so we would just need a MON employee to stay with the group from the time their presentations begin thru lunch.

If I've forgotten anything, let me know.

Thanks,

Claudia
765-[REDACTED] Office

Note to File: Order Food once the new Enterprise System is up and running. Let Ellen know when complete.