

Connecticut Passes GMO Labeling Law



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smithsonianmag.com
June 5, 2013

Connecticut's legislature has become the first in the country to pass a law that requires labeling all genetically modified organisms. But Connecticut shoppers won't be seeing labels on their food just yet. The bill comes with a lot of caveats—most importantly that it will only actually come into effect if it can find company—but if it goes into effect, it will be the most comprehensive GMO labeling law in the nation.

Governor Dannel P. Malloy's office [issued a press release](#), explaining:

House Bill 6527 – An Act Concerning Genetically-Engineered Food, will require producers to label genetically-engineered food in Connecticut as long as four states from the New England region with an aggregate population of 20 million also adopt a labeling provision.

The fight over GMO labeling (and GMOs in general) has been a heated one for many years. Proponents of Connecticut's bill says that consumers have a right to know whether the products they're buying have been genetically modified—a term the bill defined this way:

“...food that is intended for human consumption and seed that is intended to produce food for human consumption, which has been genetically altered by scientists to improve its ability to grow in non-native environments, resist pests, tolerate extreme weather conditions, produce more food (like milk in cows), or show other desired traits.”

Opponents point out that very little, if any, science has proven GMOs to be dangerous for people’s health. Genetics professor [Pamela Ronald wrote in *Scientific American* in 2011](#), “There is broad scientific consensus that genetically engineered crops currently on the market are safe to eat. After 14 years of cultivation and a cumulative total of 2 billion acres planted, no adverse health or environmental effects have resulted from commercialization of genetically engineered crops.” And [one review paper](#) that looked at studies on adverse health effects due to genetically modified crops concluded, “The review of available literature indicates that the genetically modified crops available in the market that are intended for human consumption are generally safe; their consumption is not associated with serious health problems.”

But many lawmakers and consumers aren’t convinced. Connecticut isn’t the first state to attempt to label GMOs. Last year, Californians voted on Proposition 37, which would have required companies to label GMO foods. New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island are all talking about GMO labeling bills right now. [In Alaska, they passed a bill in 2005 that required labeling genetically engineered fish and shellfish.](#)

It remains to be seen whether Connecticut will get enough support from its neighboring states for their bill to go into effect, but the debate over GMO labeling won’t be going away any time soon.

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About Rose Eveleth



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