

## NOTES FOR GMO PUBLIC HEARING

Hi, my name is Pat Bigelow. I'm the voluntary Coordinator for Berlin's Community Garden. Between 2001-2006, I studied Nutritional Sciences at St. Joseph College and then at UConn-Storrs. I focused on the relationships between food, agriculture, and the environment. The more I learned, the more I knew that GMOs didn't belong in our food supply.

There's nothing natural about putting genes from one specie (like a fish) into the DNA of a completely different species (like a tomato). But it's being done...to our food...without our knowledge or consent. And it's just not right. **We have the right to know what's in our food.**

**80%** of processed- or fast- foods, contain one or more genetically modified ingredient.

~90% of soy, corn, cotton, and canola grown in the US are GE - they are the big four. Soy and Corn derivatives are in most processed foods. If it comes in a box from the supermarket, it is probably genetically engineered. All four are used in vegetable oil. The minor food crops are Hawaiian papaya, zucchini and crookneck squash, and sugar beets.

**There are 97 GM ingredients that are "invisible":**

**They hide in plain sight on many ingredient labels.**

Just to name a few: (quickly read the highlighted items from list, ~15 out of 97)

**If asked:** The guide is available online at

<http://nongmoshoppingguide.com/brands/invisible-gm-ingredients.html> .

In March 2001, the CDC reported that food is responsible for twice the number of illnesses in the U.S. compared to estimates just seven years earlier. This increase roughly corresponds to the period when Americans have been eating GM food.

Without follow-up tests, which neither the industry or government are doing, we can't be absolutely sure if genetic engineering was the cause. **There is "reasonable doubt" that these foods are safe.**

Having my own issues with food allergies, GM foods put me at a higher risk for an allergic reaction...because the **process** of genetically modification is inexact. It is

unknown where the introduced gene will land after it's been inserted, how it will affect the DNA, or what kind of protein will be made.

In the early 1990s, one of the world's largest seed companies, Pioneer Hi-Bred, developed a more nutritious type of soybean by adding a gene taken from Brazil nuts. The gene coded for a protein rich in methionine, a nutrient that is in short supply in ordinary soybeans. At the company's request, an allergy specialist studied antibodies and immune responses in sera from patients allergic to Brazil nuts.

**The project was dropped when it was discovered that the novel soybean would trigger a major attack in people with Brazil nut allergies.**

Critics of gene technology often cite this case as an example of narrowly averted disaster, particularly as research based on animal experiments published a few years earlier suggested that this same protein was not an allergen.

For people who are fatally allergic to Brazil nuts, eating this GE soy could have been lethal.

***I personally relate to this because I'm highly allergic to cashew nuts. I don't want to be toe-tagged someday because I happened to eat an unlabeled "something" that had a gene from a cashew nut genetically engineered into it...and it wasn't labeled.***

**AS IF ALLERGIES WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH...**

**Last year, a peer-reviewed study from Canada showed** that certain insecticides which are genetically engineered into plants **will** persist in the human bloodstream -- including the bloodstreams of pregnant women and newborns.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21338670>

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Sherbrooke Hospital Centre, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada.

**A study done by researchers at the University of Caen (France) just released their findings which was printed in the Journal of Applied Toxicology...**

Insecticidal Bt toxins such as those produced in genetically engineered plants can be detrimental to human cells.

Gilles-Eric Séralini, supervisor of the experiments says, "Now further investigations have to be conducted to find out how these toxins impact the cells and if combinatorial effects with other compounds in the food and feed chain have to be taken into account. In conclusion, these experiments show that the risks of Bt toxins and of Roundup have been underestimated."

**In summary:**

Right now, we are all subjects in a giant experiment. We should be able to make informed choices about the foods that we eat. Not everyone has the option of shopping at *Whole Foods Market* and even there, not everything is organic or non-GMO. We need labels for accountability and transparency. We need the freedom of choice.

Thank you...

*"Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO): Plants or animals that have had their genetic makeup altered to exhibit traits that are not naturally theirs."*

~From the Glossary on the Monsanto Website<sup>1</sup>