

Friday, March 15, 2013

My testimony in support HB 6519 - An Act Concerning The Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food

Submitted by: Jennifer O'Neil Sarwar, 4 Stanford Hill Road, Essex, CT 06426

I am a mother of two young boys, ages 10 and 8 and I am a deeply concerned constituent. I urge you to please support legislation that would require the labeling of GMOs in Connecticut. I strongly feel that as a consumer, I have the right to know what I feed my family. Clearly labeled food containing GMOs gives me a choice of whether I want to buy the product or not. It would be my decision of what my children, husband, and I put into our bodies, not the corporations.

I have great concern for the health of my children. There are no long-term studies of the effects of GMOs, which as a mother scares me! My children's bodies are still developing! Documentaries, scientific research, testing, and studies all show possible correlations to gastrointestinal disorders, infertility, cancer, autism, and reproductive disorders to name a few. I feel as though we are part of an experiment. We are one of the only developed countries without labeling laws (Canada is the other). When it comes to GMOs, we are shopping blind. It is a request to exercise our right of freedom of choice. It's our constitutional right as an American citizen.

In recent years, food-labeling requirements have helped consumers know what they buy and what they are eating because there is a list of ingredients, nutritional information and the amounts of sugar, fat, and calorie content. Simply listing GMO on food-labels is a valid addition to our existing labels.

When our American Corporations export food to Russia, Europe & Asia, they must follow strict labeling guidelines and requirements avoiding GMOs. When manufacturers import food to America the USDA and FDA don't require strict labeling guidelines restricting the use of GMOs. (Refer to Exhibit's A through G)

Coca-Cola and Nutella manufacture food and beverages quite differently according to import or export regulations. The information differs greatly on their labels and websites particularly on nutritional facts and ingredients. Nutella's American website DOES NOT state whether or not their product contains GMOs, however the international website clearly states that they don't use any genetically modified ingredients in their products. (Refer to Exhibit F and G)

Two Case Studies – Coca-Cola & Nutella

Exhibit A

Coca-Cola made in Mexico versus made in the America

Source: HuffPost Taste, 03.11.13

Article: Coca-Cola Taste Test: High Fructose Corn Syrup vs. Sugar

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/07/coca-cola-taste-test_n_1324282.html

Nearly 30 years ago, **Coca-Cola switched over from sugar to high-fructose corn syrup** to sweeten America's beloved carbonated soft drink. **With corn subsidized by the government, its sugary syrup became a more affordable option for the beverage company".**

While this switch went largely unnoticed for quite some time (though it's common knowledge these days), it didn't take place on an international level. Actually, the **sweetener used in Coca-Cola varies from country to country based on what ingredient is most affordable for the bottling plant's location. And in many countries, Mexico included, Coke is still made with real sugar.**

Exhibit B

Where to Find/Buy Mexican Coke - <http://WhereToFindMexicanCoke.com/>
(ONLY 4 places in Connecticut carry this product!)

Exhibit C

Mexican Coke

Source: Wikipedia - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Coke

Mexican Coke, also called "Coca Cola de Mexico," "Coke de Mexico," or, informally, "MexiCoke,"^[citation needed] is Coca-Cola that is made and bottled in Mexico^[1] in a thick glass bottle. Although intended for consumption in Mexico, Mexican Coke has become popular in the United States because of a flavor that fans call "a lot more natural tasting".^[1] **The primary difference in flavor between Mexican Coke and the American Coca Cola recipe is that Mexican Coke is sweetened using cane sugar as opposed to high-fructose corn syrup.**

Exhibit D

Source: Coca-Cola's UK website: <http://www.coca-cola.co.uk/fag/environment/do-any-coca-cola-products-use-gm-ingredients.html>

Do any Coca-Cola product use GM ingredients? No, we don't use any genetically modified ingredients in our drinks.

Exhibit E

Source: CSR wire The Corporate Social Responsibility Newswire

Article: Time to Refresh: National Coalition Calls On Coca-Cola and Pepsi To Label GMOs... or Stop Using Them, 03.06.13 http://www.csrwire.com/press_releases/35309-Time-to-Refresh-National-Coalition-Calls-On-Coca-Cola-and-Pepsi-To-Label-GMOs-or-Stop-Using-Them

High fructose corn syrup and sugar, the staple ingredients in any soda, are derived from two of the most extensively genetically engineered crops: corn and sugar beets. According to the Non-GMO Project, 95 percent of the sugar beet crop and more than 88 percent of the corn crop are now genetically modified in the US. Even diet options are not guaranteed to be non-GMO, as aspartame, the most common artificial sweetener, is made from a genetically modified bacteria.

GMOs have never been proven safe for consumption, and a growing body of studies is raising concerns around the health effects of eating them. GMOs are also increasing the use of toxic herbicides and causing harm to farmers in the US and abroad. Adding to this injustice is the fact that both Coca-Cola and Pepsi offer non-GMO versions of their products in Europe, where the labeling of genetically modified ingredients is required".

Exhibit F

Source: Nutella's International website (Turkey) - http://www.nutella.com.tr/en/faq_be

Does NUTELLA® contain GMO? NUTELLA® does not contain GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms)

Why is NUTELLA® being sold in a glass jar? Glass is a material, which does not interact with food microbiologically. It helps maintain its taste and odor for a long time which is why NUTELLA®'s unique flavour is being presented in a glass jar.

Are there any preservatives and coloring agents in NUTELLA®? Under no circumstances NUTELLA® contains preservatives, coloring agents and does not contain trans fats.

Ingredients: sugar, palm oil, hazelnut (13%), fat-reduced cocoa powder (7,4%), skimmed milk powder (6.6%), whey powder (dairy product), emulsifier, lecithin (soya), vanillin.

Exhibit G

Source: Nutella's American website - <http://www.nutellausa.com/ingredients.htm>

- Over 50 Hazelnuts per 13 oz. Jar
- Contains No Artificial Colors
- Contains No Artificial Preservatives

INGREDIENTS: SUGAR, PALM OIL, HAZELNUTS, COCOA, SKIM MILK, REDUCED MINERALS WHEY (MILK), LECITHIN AS EMULSIFIER (SOY), VANILLIN: AN ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 2 tbsp. (37g)			
Servings about 10			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 200	Calories from Fat 110		
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat 12g	18%		
Saturated Fat 4g	20%		
Trans Fat 0g			
Cholesterol 0mg	0%		
Sodium 15mg	1%		
Total Carbohydrate 21g	7%		
Dietary Fiber 1g	5%		
Sugars 21g			
Protein 2g			
Vitamin A 0%	•	Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 4%	•	Iron 4%	
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	26g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat	9	* Carbohydrate	4
		* Protein	4