
CropLife Australia Policy Statement on Labelling of Foods Derived from Genetically Modified Crops

Key Points

CropLife Australia supports mandated requirements for accurate and informative food product labels where these requirements communicate information that is relevant to human health and safety.

Food Standard 1.5.2 mandates the pre-market safety assessment and labelling of genetically modified (GM) foods and food ingredients in Australia.

Labelling of GM food has nothing to do with the health or safety of the food. All approved GM foods sold in Australia have been rigorously assessed and found to be safe by the responsible Regulator: Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

Mandatory labelling for non-health reasons can imply a health concern and can reinforce misconceptions in the community. CropLife believes there is no need for the mandatory labelling of GM food ingredients as required under current Australian law.

CropLife supports a food company's choices to voluntarily label food products noting certain attributes (i.e. low-fat) based on their customers' preferences and providing the label is truthful and not misleading.

Voluntary labelling permits food manufacturers to provide what they consider to be adequate information relating to food in-line with consumer purchasing behaviour.

General Policy – All approved GM foods and food ingredients sold in Australia are safe

CropLife supports FSANZ's rigorous and transparent process for assessing the safety of GM foods, based on internationally established scientific principles and guidelines.

Every legitimate scientific and regulatory body that has examined the evidence has arrived at the conclusion that approved GM crops and the foods derived from them are as safe as their conventional counterparts. This includes the World Health Organization; the Australian Academy of Science; the European Commission; the American National Academy of Sciences; the Royal Society of Medicine and many more.

Specific Policy Objectives

CropLife does not support the mandatory labelling of GM foods and food ingredients in Australia where it bears no relevance to the health or safety of the food or ingredients.

Mandatory labelling for non-health and safety reasons can imply a regulatory concern where none exists and can reinforce misconceptions in the community.



A food label has finite space and can contain a fixed amount of information. Unnecessary mandatory requirements reduce the ability of food manufacturers to provide information about the product that may be more important to consumer purchasing decisions. All information on labels comes at a cost, and CropLife believes that consumers should not be required to pay for mandatory information where there is no risk to human health or safety.

CropLife supports voluntary labelling of foods and food ingredients where that information is not misleading or deceptive. Voluntary labelling recognises a balance between the provision of consumer information with the cost and other practicalities of providing that information.

Food manufacturers will voluntarily provide production information if there is a significant proportion of consumers who would prefer to purchase products that contain that information. For example, 'organic', 'low-fat', 'low-salt' and 'free-range' are all marketing terms widely and voluntarily used by food manufacturers in response to consumer demand.

A voluntary-labelling system for approved GM foods and food ingredients would react more quickly to consumers losing interest in particular marketing information on a food label. For example: if a manufacturer was not providing certain voluntary marketing information to consumers and producing food at a lower cost without losing market share, then competitors would quickly emulate this approach. Alternatively, if a large proportion of consumers demanded certain information and preferentially purchased products that contained that information, then manufacturers would also react to this promptly.

CropLife strongly supports amending Food Standard 1.5.2 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standard Code to remove the requirement for mandatory labelling of approved GM foods and food ingredients.