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Hybrid crops vs GMOs (genetically modified organisms)

Wednesday, January 09, 2013

Last week when I wrote about my supersized potatoes, I was mainly interested in calories and portion control. SuzyMobile mentioned the possibility that they were genetically modified. That's something I wanted to investigate.

According to Rodale.com (The Organic Gardening people)

Hybrids are formed by taking 2 parents plants of the same species and pollinating them for desirable traits like disease or drought resistance.

Crossbreeding hybrids has been going on for centuries and it has a long track record of feeding humans and mammals effectively

In genetic modification genes from different species that could never be cross pollinated in nature can be modified in a lab using a "gene gun" or bacterial infection.

Source: www.rodale.com/genetical-ly-modified-seeds?page=0,1

The other side:

GMO advocates point to the fact that nature can make mistakes too. In June 2012 a report from Austin, Texas (examiner.com) tells of 15 of 18 cattle dying from cyanide gas poisoning. The gas suddenly began being emitted by a pasture of grass grown from hybrid (not GMO) seeds that the rancher had been using for 15 years.

However, his area was experiencing severe drought. The lack of oxygen in the soil caused the excess of carbon and nitrogen and the plants vented the excess as cyanide gas. I wonder if excessive use of nitrogen based fertilizer was also a factor considering the drought conditions.

Why does that not make me feel better about GMOs? The author's premise, echoed by some of the comments, is that we shouldn't be misled by anti-GMO hype.

Labeling our food as GMO-free seems a logical step to me. Way back in the fifties I remember companies resisting the requirement for ingredient labels on their foods. I also know the massive amount of money poured into California by agribusiness to defeat the GMO labeling initiative.

We can't discount the profit motive.

Hybrid seeds cannot be patented, but GMO seeds can.

OK, so how do we avoid this new technology if we want to. It's not easy

The article below lists the most GMO enhanced products in the USA

Soy, corn, cottonseed, canola oil, U.S. papaya, alfalfa, milk, sugar beets and aspartame with accompanying explanations.

www.greenamerica.org/pubs/greenamerican/articles/A

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No mention of potatoes which started me off on this quest for information. I'll have to check that out further.

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BREWMASTERBILL

GMO is rapidly becoming associated with conspiracy theory types. It's hard to take their demands seriously. I'm all for more transparency. If that quells the conspiracy theorists all the better ... but I'm skeptical of that.

3076 days ago



4A-HEALTHY-BMI

Interesting topic.

Potatoes can most definitely be modified. They are so easily modified that they were used as the example by Michael Pollan in "The Botany of Desire" as a plant that appeals to our ability to play with it and change things...



And it's not the genetically modified DNA that people object to. The DNA itself, of course, is just DNA.

It's what that DNA codes for that concerns some. Whether it's pesticides, or molecules that confer resistance to frost or herbicides, or plant diseases, etc.

The concerns include what those molecules might do to us if we eat them, and what those plants might do if they get loose in the environment and hybridize with weeds and create "superweeds" which have unusual herbicide or pest resistance.

The jury is still out on whether GMOs are bad for us and bad for the environment.

And the scientific community has responded to much of the backlash by exploring moving genes from, say, one apple species to another apple species directly using transgenic technology rather than traditional plant breeding techniques because it's faster and more accurate.

3076 days ago

Comment edited on: 1/11/2013 12:14:40 AM



LOLATURTLE

I've done a lot of reading about this, because I find the headlines and scare tactics on both sides so frustrating.

I started to write a long reply but it got VERY long so I think I'll add my own blog about it, too!

The bottom line is, I am FOR transparency in our food system. I think people should have a choice. And some GMO crops are bad for the environment. Many are bad for farmers and their independence and livelihoods.

But anatomically and physiologically, there is ZERO difference between eating a kernel of "regular" corn and GMO corn. Your digestive system does NOT know the difference between genetically modified DNA and "natural" DNA, because there is NOTHING IN GMO DNA that isn't in every piece of DNA of every organism on the face of the earth. They are digested exactly the same way, and cannot hurt you. Assuming both pieces of food are clean and free of pesticides and any infections (bacteria, viruses, fungus), your body can not tell the difference. I promise.

3078 days ago

Comment edited on: 1/9/2013 3:35:54 PM



MJZHERE

I too am for labeling (also remembered the resistance to putting ingredients on labels). At least then we can make the choice.

3078 days ago



LEB0401

Great blog.. it was food for thought.

I'm ok with hybrid crops. One summer the bees in my parents' garden cross pollinated a jalapeno





with a green pepper. We ended up with delicious mini-bell peppers that had just a hint of spice--serendipity!

GMOs on the other hand... scare me. I've read that they have infused the genes of some arctic fish scales into a tomato to make it frost-resistant. Freaky.
3078 days ago



DIANE7786

I don't eat foods I know are GMO's--Frankenfood!
3078 days ago



SUZYMOBILE

Good for you! Had I the time, I'd research it myself.
3078 days ago



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