

## What are genetically modified organisms (GMO)

Organisms (bacteria, animals, plants) in which the genetic material (DNA) has been modified in a way that does not occur naturally.

## What is accomplished with the genetic modification?

The initial objective was to improve crop protection through the development of plants based on genetically modified organisms.

Organisms are given new desirable traits, which in plants usually concern resistance against plant diseases caused by insects or viruses or increased tolerance towards pesticides. The ultimate gain is increase of crop production.

## What is genetically modified food?

It is a food that **contains, consists** of or is **produced** by GMOs.

## What is an approved genetic modification?

It is the modification that has been approved for use in food stuffs or animal feed in the European Union, after a satisfactory risk assessment carried out by EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), aiming towards the best possible protection for the environment and human health. Such genetic modifications are currently found in corn, soya, cotton, rape-seed and sugarcane.



## Labeling of genetically modified foods

European citizens often voice concerns for the safety of GMOs.

The European legislation for labeling and traceability of genetically modified organisms and the traceability of food and feed products (Reg. 1829/2003/E.U & Reg. 1830/2003/E.U), **safeguards the right to choose** whether or not to consume genetically modified foods.

The labeling of foods that contain, consist of or are produced by GMO is mandatory when the genetic modification exceeds 0.9%. It is recorded on the trade label of the manufactured product as follows:

**“Contains or is derived from GMO”**

or

**“This product is produced from GMO”**

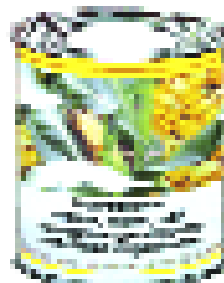
# Consumer, you have the right to choose!

## Read the label carefully

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GM FOOD

## How would I know if the food product that I am buying contains GMO?

The producing company is obliged to inform the consumers if the product contains GM ingredients. The consumers should pay attention to the labels that list the product's ingredients



## Are all GM foods labeled?

Legislation does not require labeling for products which contain, consist of or are produced by GMOs less than 0,9% of the food ingredient in case of an approved genetic modification.

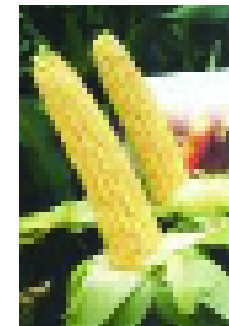
Any non approved genetic modification should not be present at all.

To confirm the correct labeling of products, the GMO Laboratory of the State General Laboratory and the Public Health Authorities of the Ministry of Health, carry out routine sampling and laboratory testing of various food types available in the market.

From the monitoring and control carried out so far, genetically modified foods sold in Cyprus are very few and almost all of them are approved. In the case where positive non labeled samples are found, the importers or producers are forced to label their products accordingly.

## What are GMO free products?

They are products which according to their manufacturers do not contain genetically modified organisms. They are accompanied with certification that they were not produced by GMO (GMO free certificate).



## What is modified starch and how is it related to genetically modified starch?

The definition "modified" refers to the special treatment of starch that enables it to set without boiling and does not concern the existence of a genetic modification. This does not mean that modified starch cannot also be genetically modified.



## GMO Laboratory at the State General Laboratory

The GMO Laboratory is the official laboratory for GMO testing as well as the National Reference Laboratory for GMO in food. It is a member of the European network of GMO Laboratories (ENGL).

The consumer's right to choice can only be safeguarded through the accurate labeling of food-stuffs. In order to achieve this, the laboratory, in collaboration with the Public Health Authorities, carries out systematic control at the point of sale and import, as well as the importers' warehouses.

## Summary

Genetically Modified Organisms are very promising and are now a reality, but this does not mean that their production and cultivation can be uncontrolled. Their production and their release in the environment demands continuous controls, assessments and licensing so as to provide the public with the best possible protection.

The EU has in place strict legislation regarding the genetically modified organisms in food and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) carries out risk assessment studies. However, various groups of EU citizens oppose the use of GMO production and consumption and express concerns for the safety of human health and environment.

E.U. safeguards the right of its citizens to information and the right to choose their food through enforced labeling.

Any violations on food labeling are checked routinely by all member states with very strict penalties for violators.



## Genetically Modified Organisms Laboratory

**State General Laboratory**

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P.I.O. 143/2010 — 500

Published by the Press and Information Office

Printed: Kailas Printers and Lithographers Ltd



Printed on recycled paper



**STATE  
GENERAL  
LABORATORY**

Genetically  
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**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT  
TO CHOOSE!**



MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS