

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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July 13, 2015

Mr. Val Giddings
Senior Fellow
Information Technology and
Innovation Foundation
9004 Fairview Road
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Giddings:

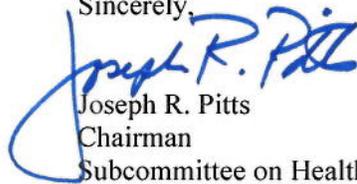
Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Health on June 18, 2015, to testify at the hearing entitled "A National Framework for the Review and Labeling of Biotechnology in Food."

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on July 27, 2015. Your responses should be mailed to Graham Pittman, Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 and e-mailed in Word format to graham.pittman@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,


Joseph R. Pitts
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health

cc: The Honorable Gene Green, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health

Attachment

Attachment — Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Representative Guthrie

1. When it comes to the rigorous safety reviews that you mentioned at length in your testimony, could you put into laymen terms what some of the key components of a safety study are that meets widely accepted standards? Put another way, what qualifies as strong data or evidence in your field?

As I understand the very basics of the FDA consultation process, a developer first defines the distinguishing attributes of a food and analyzes it for levels of toxins and allergens, and compares the food to a traditionally bred counterpart. Then the FDA evaluates the developer's safety assessments and considers relevant data and information.

2. Beyond the developer's safety study itself, what other relevant data and information does the FDA consider?
3. Does the FDA rely on independent studies when reviewing a food?

You mention in your testimony that the FDA requires labeling of "any food that has been changed, by any means, so that its composition is different in any way related to health, safety, or nutrition."

4. Could you briefly define the word "food" as it's used in this context?

The Honorable Representative Burgess

As you may know, the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) regulates the production and labeling of organic foods. Organic certification is required if a product is to be labeled as an organic product under the USDA. To comply with the NOP, a company must adhere to the NOP requirements, which in the case of an agricultural product derived from animals prohibits the use of GMO feed, the use of growth of hormones, and the use of antibiotics. According to the draft bill language before you, the type of feed used in creating a covered agricultural product derived from animals is not specifically defined.

1. Do you agree that there should be one definition for "non-GMO" under federal law because otherwise consumers will be deceived as to what "non-GMO" on a label actually means?

A company that has already met the definition of organic has met the federal definition of non-GMO and therefore should automatically be eligible for a new, non-GMO certification should a new non-GMO labeling program be created.

2. It would be inherently unfair for a company to have to go through the non-GMO certification process twice. Don't you agree?

3. You discuss in your testimony that this coordinated campaign of labeling advocates is part of a strategy to end the use of biotechnology in food and agricultural production. How so?
4. If they were successful in these efforts, how would that impact our ability to provide affordable and nutritious food to American families?
5. Would it not raise food costs for working people in our country?
6. Have there been any medically documented cases of people getting sick from eating a food derived from genetically engineered crops?

The Honorable Representative Lance

1. It appears to me that perhaps much of the uncertainty some people have regarding this technology is due to a lack of understanding of what GMOs are and how they are made. Can you describe, in layman's terms, what a genetically modified organism is and walk us through the process of how they are developed?
2. Dr. Giddings, in your testimony you mentioned the term "conventional breeding" as compared to "recombinant techniques". Can you explain those terms to the committee and elaborate on the differences between the two techniques? When and how are both techniques used?
3. As many today have pointed out, "FDA regulations already require that any novel ingredient that may affect the health, safety or nutritional value of a food must be identified on the label." Can you please describe for the committee the thresholds a product must meet in order to be put on the market?
4. To your knowledge have any genetically engineered (GE) foods been removed from the market due to safety concerns?

The Honorable Representative Cardenas

I understand that there is already an independent private sector certification body for foods produced without genetic engineering.

1. What impact would this new legislative language have on existing private label non-GMO claims?
2. Since the cost of certifying non-GMO products is currently not being borne on the tax payer, how much would it cost to create the new USDA certification standard for GE and non-GMO foods?

A number of major food brands produce organic lines in addition to their conventional brands. The U.S. also exports a large amount of Identity Preserved non-GMO grain to export markets in Europe and Asia.

3. So to what extent is there already segregation in the supply chain and would that be close to sufficient if GE foods were required to be labeled at a federal level? Are there enough farmers and farm workers to produce a sufficient amount of non-GMO or organic food?