

Attachment---Additional Questions for the Record

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 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?

I agree there should be a single, transparent standard for labeling food derived from ingredients utilizing biotechnology. Furthermore, I think a collage of varying state and local labeling laws would stigmatize biotechnology as being unsafe or unhealthy which will jeopardize the future use of the technology.

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?

I do not have the expertise to comment on the effectiveness of the NOP certification program but do believe that common definitions and standards should be utilized under both programs.

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?

Our safe and affordable food supply system in the United States is the result of the application of safe technology on the farm combined with efficient manufacturing and distribution of food. A patchwork of state and local food labeling laws would unscientifically prejudice consumers. Many manufacturers might decide it would be more efficient to completely eliminate GMO products rather than try to manufacture and distribute foods in smaller quantities to meet those local label requirements.

4. If they were successful in these efforts, how would that impact our ability to provide affordable and nutritious food to American families?

GMO technology allows farmers to produce greater yields with fewer inputs, and less environmental impact. The bottom line is, without the use of biotechnology, food will be just as nutritious but less affordable and less abundant.

5. Would it not raise food costs for working people in our country?

American agriculture has demonstrated that improvements in technology on the farm result in lower food costs to consumers. Regulations that impede the use of biotechnology will result in higher cost of production for farmers, and more expensive food.

6. Have there been any medically documented cases of people getting sick from eating a food derived from genetically engineered crops?

Not to my knowledge. It is my understanding that all major worldwide health organizations that have studied the safety of consuming genetically engineered crops have found they are as safe as their conventional counterparts.

The Honorable Representative Lance

1. Can you elaborate on the Coordinated Framework for Regulation of Biotechnology by the United States? What is the process for developing and bringing to market a “GMO” product? What kind of research and testing must be conducted? What agencies must evaluate the technology?

To my knowledge, agricultural biotechnology products in the U.S. are regulated by three agencies: the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). However, I am not an expert on the process of the development and approval of new seed technologies.

2. As a farmer, how do you determine what type of seeds to plant on your land? Why have you continued to utilize biotechnology seeds?

The selection of seed is one of the most important decisions that I make on my farm. There certainly is a difference in yield between different kinds of seeds. Yield is the result of the genetic capability of the seed combined with the farmer’s ability to manage insects, weeds, disease and water. Biotech seeds prevent insects from damaging the crop and also allow for the use of more effective weed control systems. Controlling insects and weeds results in the maximum utilization of water. Biotech seeds can be more expensive, but farmers can choose if the benefits they bring are worth the extra expense.

Biotech crops are invaluable to my operation. In my lifetime of farming, I have had to abandon parts of fields riddled with insect damage. Harvesting fields damaged by insects or overcome by weeds are not just an economic loss, they present a real risk of physical harm to farmers and farm workers. Using biotech-developed crops has helped me to avoid many of these problems today. I also know that the crops I grow today, benefiting from

biotechnology, are just as safe and healthy as the crops grown by my parents and grandparents.

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?

I don't have the expertise necessary to answer this question.

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?

I don't have the expertise necessary to answer this question.

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?

Farmers have always been very good at responding to the marketplace and customer demands. Today there are farmers who currently choose to grow conventional or organic crops to fulfill that portion of the market, and segregation of that part of the supply chain exists. When we eliminate technology it requires more resources to produce food. Those resources include farmers and farm labor, but also land, water and plant nutrients. The cost to society and the environment from eliminating technology on the farm would be very high.