



Who's Afraid of GMO's?
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Who's afraid of GMO's? Lots of folks. The real issue is the purpose of the modification more than the disclosure of presence. The disclosure should not be an issue. The ability for consumers to make informed choices about the foods they eat is a necessity. The matter of the modification itself remains the most controversial issue. There are essentially three types of GMO's consumers should seek to understand better and consider: ADDING something to the genetic code, REMOVING something from the genetic code and MODIFYING something existing in the genetic code. The reality is that these changes are an acceleration of traditional farming practices albeit, selective breeding, a dated form enhancing crops/foods stemming from the fundamentals of Natural Selection. The resultant changes are those that provide the same benefits whether from traditional methods or from the application of current science. From the moment we humans, as a species, began to cultivate rather than to simply hunt and gather, we began a basic process of genetic modification.

There are two areas to consider in this comparative acceleration and we need to view these issues from the standpoint of the reality of the modifications made, regardless of method employed. GMO's are used to provide economic benefit far more often than benefit to the consumer. We have traditionally modified the genetic code through crop selection and hybridization with the goal of producing more crops per acre rather than enhancing the nutritional aspects of the crop. If we were to analyze crops produced from traditional methods beginning with the first cultivation to cultivation practices now, most of these would result in either neutral or diminished levels of nutrients. Instead we do this

so that the crops are abundant and compacted in terms of yield or have a better appearance rendering them more desirable, which increases demand, but also consequences, good and bad, not exclusively one or the other. Now, review the modifications, empirically rather than as methodology. If, through selective growing and re-planting, a tomato strain was developed that provides twice the level of lycopene as its originator, that would be considered a very good thing. However, if the same results were achieved in a single effort through genetic modification (the MODIFYING option), the result would be viewed negatively based on current status quo. Why should this be considered as a negative if the achievement is of legitimate benefit to the same consumer? Consideration of all achievements, whether through traditional crop selection or through direct scientific application, must be allowed, qualified and better understood in order for the consumer to make the informed choices about the food they intend to eat. Consider this food for thought!
