



What if grocery stores were GMO-free?

By Holly Loucas

Have you ever wondered what the grocery store would look like without genetically modified organisms (GMOs)? Recently, I was asked this question and it got me thinking.

Even with my ag background, my first thought was, "The shelves would be bare!" It's amazing how many food products, pharmaceuticals and household goods are made with corn or soybeans – two of the primary GMO crops grown in North America today. If we eliminated GMOs, farmers would still need to grow these crops to feed both humans and livestock; however, they would use conventional soybean varieties and corn hybrids, which would require more intervention to control weeds and other pests.

So, in theory, if we did remove GMO produce and foods that include GMO ingredients, the grocery store shelves would look somewhat the same but food would be much more expensive.

How would 'GMO-free' change our shopping experience?

- **Fewer choices:** This is a classic case of supply and demand. With lower yield, the supply of product would decrease and cost of raw product would increase significantly. Many product manufacturers would close their doors rather than lose money to pay for the increased price of raw product. Overall, this would lead to fewer choices on our grocery store shelves, with larger brands likely making up most choices.
- **Higher price tags:** In addition to fewer choices, the increased demand for raw ingredients or materials would inevitably drive up costs overall. It would be highly unlikely that product manufacturers and retail stores would absorb these costs and would, instead, pass them on to consumers.
- **A less sustainable end product:** The reduction in yield would impact sustainability efforts in two ways. The first would be increased land use. More land would need to be cultivated to produce food on the levels we expect today. We are already farming on marginal land and land that is only feasible through irrigation. Increased land use and water use would be a bigger tax on our natural resources, overall.

While GMOs have a mixed reputation, they do a lot of good. They provide more quality product that's produced in a sustainable way. This results in more variety and lower prices to you as a consumer. I, for one, appreciate the variety when I am planning my family's meals!



Holly Loucas is a 44-year-old mother of two who has spent the last 20+ years doing research developing and using genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and molecular biology at the University of Guelph and the University of Florida.

This article appears in the Plate-Wise blog. It has been edited for brevity, but you can read the whole story at <https://www.corteva.com/resources/blog/blog-articles/plate-wise/gmo-free-grocery-stores.html>.

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