



Frequently Asked Questions About: Measure B

Please Remember to Vote YES on B November 2nd

1. **What are GMOs?**

GMOs are genetically modified organisms. They are artificially created seeds, plants, livestock and aquaculture products (seafood, shellfish, etc.) which contain the genes of totally different species – such as inserting fish genes into tomatoes, spider genes into goats, jellyfish genes into potatoes and even human genes into rice. This is a process that does not and cannot occur naturally.

2. **What does ballot Measure B do?**

Measure B protects our health, food supply, environment and our farms by prohibiting the raising or cultivation of GMO products in Marin County. It does not affect the importation of any food or medicine into the county.

3. **What about its impact on future medical advances?**

Measure B has no impact on biotech applications for medical research, including stem cell research. Measure B explicitly permits indoor medical research, production and treatment.

4. **Have GMO foods been thoroughly safety-tested?**

No. The Bush Administration has refused to conduct safety testing on genetically modified foods. Even though numerous government scientists have stated that the process of genetic engineering is unpredictable and could create new hazards to human health and the environment, the Bush Administration has adhered to the belief that genetically modified foods are “substantially equivalent” to other foods. As a result, no independent safety testing is conducted during the approval process. Companies bringing a new genetically modified food to market are not even required to notify the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) beforehand. There have been no long-term studies to show that genetically modified foods are safe for human health or our environment.

5. **How would GMOs affect our environment?**

GMO plants could cross-pollinate with, and contaminate, Marin’s wild grasslands. Because some major GMO crops encourage use of herbicides, resistant strains of common weeds could appear, limiting our ability to ultimately control them. The GMO manufacturers themselves predicted the emergence of such “superweeds” due to the intensive use of their chemicals. In addition, independent scientific studies found that pollen from GMO corn has poisoned Monarch butterflies. GMOs may also harm other beneficial insects, birds and animals. Other impacts on our regional ecosystem are unstudied and totally unknown.

6. **Why are GMOs a concern for Marin’s environment and agriculture?**

GMO crops already available for planting include tomatoes, squash, potatoes and radicchio – all vegetables typically grown on Marin’s small farms. Hundreds of other GMO products are in the pipeline, covering a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and several varieties of GMO grass. These new genetic combinations do not just stay where they’re planted. Seeds and pollen are carried by wind, insects and birds. They can spread onto neighboring property, contaminating the crops of farmers who don’t want them, and even mixing with the fruits and vegetables planted in personal small backyard gardens.

7. **Does Measure B protect private property?**

Yes. GMO manufacturers own the rights to their seeds. In fact, farmers who plant GMO crops sign a contract allowing their land to be inspected by the manufacturer at any time. In cases where GMO pollen has contaminated neighboring crops, farmers have been forced to pay fines and annual license fees to the GMO manufacturer, regardless of whether or not they ever purchased GMO seeds. These one-sided legal consequences, weighted in favor of the GMO manufacturers, have already bankrupted farmers throughout the US and Canada. The only way to protect private property from being contaminated is to keep GMOs out of Marin.

8. **What financial impact would GMOs have on Marin farms and ranches?**

Agriculture contributes over \$50 million annually to Marin's economy. Because our county's agricultural products are famous for their purity and high quality, they tend to bring our farmers and ranchers a higher income. If their land and crops inadvertently become contaminated by GMOs, our food producers will likely lose valuable certifications and markets because of consumer rejection. Similarly, contamination of the grasses in our ranchers' pastures could destroy the market for their grass-fed beef and high-quality dairy products.

9. **Do GMOs reduce pesticide use?**

No. A 2003 study, analyzing the USDA's own statistics since 1996, found that pesticide use has actually increased with the planting of GMO crops. The corporations making and selling GMOs also own 60% of the global pesticide market. They do not benefit from farmers using fewer chemicals; rather, they profit from selling more of them. Monsanto's "RoundUp Ready" soybeans and canola are two of the most widely-used GMOs. They've resulted in farmers spraying more, not less, of the "RoundUp" herbicide onto their crops, potentially polluting the surrounding air and water. Another common GMO has a pesticide engineered right into its DNA so that it is consumed as part of the food.

10. **Don't we need to grow GMOs to feed the world?**

No. This is simply a false claim put forth by the GMO manufacturers. We are already producing one and a half times the amount of food needed to provide everyone on the planet with an adequate, nutritious diet; yet every day 25,000 people die from hunger. People suffer from hunger due to social and political obstructions. The issue is inadequate distribution of food, not a lack of food production.

11. **What about the scientists who say that GMOs are safe?**

Scientists can disagree about almost every subject. Independent scientists, however, have raised concerns that GMOs may have serious and lasting dangers. A very recent in-depth investigative report by the *Sacramento Bee* newspaper noted that many of the scientists favoring GMOs have financial ties to the manufacturers of these products. The *Bee* also pointed to the huge amount of lobbying and campaign contributions made by GMO manufacturers to Congress and state legislatures, helping to prevent more stringent regulation and safety testing of GMOs. The article further points out that publicly financed research is actually being directed toward the production of new GMOs rather than studying the impacts GMOs have on our health and environment.

12. **Will Measure B increase taxes or cut services?**

No. The Marin County Agricultural Commissioner already has the authority to inspect and remove infected plants. Measure B simply adds GMOs to the list of offending plants. The Commissioner would enforce Measure B during routine inspections.



On November 2nd, Vote YES On Measure B

For a Safe and Healthy Marin

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