



GMOs

Genetically Modified Organisms

In the plant world, genetically modified organisms, often referred to as GMOs, are those whose genetic material (DNA or RNA) have been altered in ways that would not occur under natural conditions or natural processes. Unlike typical plant breeding strategies such as hybridization, which are used to develop more productive plant varieties, for example, genetic engineering is the deliberate modification of the characteristics of an organism by manipulating its genetic material. Sometimes it involves inserting a foreign gene into a plant or changing the positions of its genes.

Genetic engineering is generally done to boost production, improve a crop's ability to survive in specific environments, give it better resistance to pests and diseases, improve its nutritional qualities, or to give it immunity to certain herbicides.

Advocates of requiring labels on foods that contain GMOs say that up to 80% of packaged foods in the United States contain GMOs.

Examples of genetically modified crops that are used to make processed foods are corn and soybeans.