

Cheerios Gets No Boost from GMO Switch

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NEW YORK (AP) — Plain old [Cheerios](#) [1] are no longer made with genetically modified ingredients, but the switch hasn't yet translated to a boost in sales.

[General Mills](#) [2], the company that makes the cereal, in January announced it would start making its [plain Cheerios without GMOs](#) [3], or genetically modified organisms. The move came after a campaign by the group Green America, which prompted fans to express their support on the Cheerios' Facebook page.

On Wednesday, CEO Ken Powell said in a phone interview that the company has gotten supportive letters and online comments for its decision. But he said the company was "not really seeing anything there that we can detect" in terms of a sales lift.

"It's what I expected," Powell said. He added that genetically modified organisms aren't really a concern for most customers.

Americans have been moving away from cereal more broadly, as alternatives such as Greek yogurt or breakfast sandwiches have gained popularity.

That has left General Mills and rival Kellogg struggling to boost sales. Cheerios is no exception; Powell conceded that sales have been "down somewhat" for the brand.

As for GMOs, there has been little scientific evidence showing that foods grown from engineered ingredients are less safe than their conventional counterparts. But their use has become a growing issue, with some saying they could have longer-term health impacts and that people have the right to know if genetically modified ingredients are used in foods.

Cheerios boxes are now labeled as being "Not Made With Genetically Modified Ingredients," which is not an official certification.

The change does not apply to other boxes of Cheerios, such as Honey Nut Cheerios or Apple Cinnamon Cheerios, which still use genetically modified ingredients.

It's not the first time General Mills has adjusted its products to food trends. Executives have noted that the company was able to turnaround declining sales of Chex by rolling out varieties labelled as "gluten-free." And on Wednesday, they noted in an earnings call that they planned to renovate cereal brands by bringing such "health news" to them.

Source URL (retrieved on 01/29/2015 - 1:26pm):

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Published on Food Manufacturing (<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com>)

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