

Consumer Trends: Biotech Group to Answer Top 10 Questions About GMOs

WASHINGTON (PRNewswire-USNewswire) — The results of a new national survey, commissioned by [GMO Answers](#) [1] and the Council for Biotechnology Information, identify the leading questions consumers have about genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and how our food is grown. The survey was conducted in order to identify, for the first time, the top 10 questions consumers have about GMOs and to open up the conversation on biotechnology's role in agriculture. Over the next several weeks, scientists, farmers, doctors and other experts will be answering one of the top 10 questions each week on the [GMO Answers](#) [1] website and via Twitter.

Ipsos, a global market research company, conducted a national, random telephone survey of 1,006 American adults ages 18 and older. Participants were asked: The following are questions some people have asked about GMOs. Which of the following questions around the use of GMOs would you be most interested in having answered? From a list of 23 environmental, business and health-related questions regarding GMOs, respondents identified these questions as the top 10 they want answered:

1.	If GMOs cause cancer
2.	If GMOs are causing an increase in allergies
3.	If big companies are forcing farmers to grow GMOs
4.	If GMOs are increasing the price of food
5.	If GMOs are contaminating organic food crops
6.	Why long-term health studies aren't conducted on GMO plants
7.	If GMOs are causing an increase in the use of pesticides
8.	Why GMO companies seem like they are so against labeling GMO foods
9.	If GMOs are contributing to the death of bees and butterflies
10.	If livestock eat genetically modified grain, will there be GMOs in my meat

"A national dialogue is taking place about GMOs and it's important for us to listen to the questions consumers are asking so we can provide the information to help address their concerns," said Cathleen Enright, Ph.D., spokesperson for GMO Answers. "We are committed to transparency about how our food is grown,

including an open discussion about GMOs. This is why we asked independent, third-party experts to answer these questions publicly. Our goal is to ensure consumers have the information they need to make up their own minds about GMOs."

Since its launch last year, more than 500 questions about GMOs, food and agriculture have been answered by experts on [GMO Answers](#) [1].

Dr. Kevin Folta, University of Florida Interim Chairman and Associate Professor Horticultural Sciences Department, answered the first question: If GMOs cause cancer? "The short answer is no, there is absolutely zero reputable evidence that GMO foods cause cancer. Cancer is a name applied to a spectrum of diseases where cells proliferate abnormally. There is no way that the subtle and well understood alterations of a plant's genes can cause cancer. There is nothing about the Bt protein (used in insect resistance, also in organic pest control), the EPSPS enzyme (which confers herbicide resistance, simply by substituting for the native enzyme in the plant) or the process itself, that would induce the genetic changes in human cells that would lead to cancer. It is just not plausible.

Some of the confusion comes from reports where the Bt protein or glyphosate (the herbicide used on some GM crops) is applied to cell lines in a petri dish, and the cells show changes associated with stress and perhaps abnormal proliferation. However, cells in a dish do not behave like cells in the body. Through years of careful evaluation there is no reliable evidence that GM foods cause the same changes in a living organism.

Quite to the contrary, future plants may be engineered to produce nutrients that fight/prevent cancer, or even eliminate compounds that increase cancer risk. One such product is close to commercialization. Potatoes produce a small amount of acrylamide, a potential carcinogen, when heated to high temperatures. A potato has been engineered to not produce that compound, leading to safer food."

Among the questions not selected in the top 10, but have been the focus of conversations on GMO Answers include: if the development of GMOs is unnatural; if GMOs are causing gluten intolerance; if GMOs are contributing to obesity; if GMOs are contributing to infertility; if GMO companies are suing farmers; and if GMOs are contributing to the growth of super weeds.

"We recognize that consumers have questions about our products, and we need to do a better job explaining our technology, role in agriculture and the safety of our crops. In the coming weeks, we invite consumers to come back and follow the answers to the top 10 questions offered by experts at [GMO Answers](#) [1] and become a part of this important conversation," Enright concluded.

About GMO Answers

GMO Answers is committed to responding to your questions about how our food is grown. Our goal is to make information about agricultural biotechnology easier to access and evaluate. The members of GMO Answers commit to five core principles —welcoming and answering questions on all GMO topics; making GMO information, research and data easy to access and evaluate, and supporting independent safety

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testing of GM products using validated science-based methods; supporting farmers as they work to grow crops using precious resources more efficiently, with less impact on the environment and producing safe, nutritious food and feed products; respecting farmers' rights to choose the seeds that are best for their farms, businesses and communities and providing seed choices that include including making non-GM seeds based on market demands; and respecting people around the world and their right to choose healthy food products that are best for themselves and their families. GMO Answers is produced by the members of The Council for Biotechnology Information, which includes BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences LLC, DuPont, Monsanto Company and Syngenta. Our members are dedicated to the responsible development and application of plant biotechnology. Visit www.GMOAnswers.com [1].

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[1] <http://www.gmoanswers.com/>