



2101 Wilson Blvd., Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22201
703-243-6111 • www.nmpf.org

"Connecting Cows, Cooperatives, Capitol Hill, and Consumers"

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Contact: Christopher Galen
(703) 243-6111 ext. 356
Email: CGalen@nmpf.org

NMPF Praises Introduction of Voluntary GMO Labeling Bill *Legislation Will Eliminate Consumer Confusion and Advance Food Safety*

ARLINGTON, VA –The National Milk Producers Federation today applauded introduction of legislation establishing federal standards for the safety and labeling of foods containing genetically modified ingredients (GMOs).

Under the bill, the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act, introduced by Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-KS), the Food and Drug Administration will set standards for companies that wish to label their products as containing or not containing GMOs. In addition, FDA is required to conduct a safety review of all new genetically modified traits and could mandate labeling if there is a health, safety or nutrition issue with a particular ingredient. The legislation is co-sponsored by Reps. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Jim Matheson (D-UT) and Ed Whitfield (R-KY).

"Rather than create a patchwork of state policies, what this legislation would do is deal with this important issue at the national level," said Jim Mulhern, President and CEO of NMPF. "And since there is no reason for Congress and the FDA to require mandatory labels on foods produced through GMOs, we need this approach instead: clarifying how companies can voluntarily label their products in a way that reduces confusion at the consumer level."

Mulhern added that "genetically modified ingredients have been used in foods in this country for two decades. They add desirable traits so that crops are more plentiful and require less water and fewer pesticides. If companies want to highlight their presence, they should be able to do so in a way that enhances trust in the food supply."

The GMO labeling legislation also addresses another problem by ordering the FDA to define the term "natural" when used on food labels. Right now, there is no uniform definition of natural when applied to foods.

Up to 80 percent of the food available in the United States contains genetically modified ingredients. Agencies including the FDA, the U.S. Agriculture Department, the National Academy of Sciences and the World Health Organization have found no negative health effects from consuming GMOs.

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The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit www.nmpf.org for more information.