

5 Reasons

to Care About the New “Bioengineered Food” GMO Label

Starting Jan. 1, 2022, certain foods containing detectable genetically modified ingredients in the final product must make a Bioengineered Food (BE) disclosure, per the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard (NBFDS). NBFDS, however, is an insufficient GMO labeling law. “Bioengineered” is a confusing new word that is meant to replace “GMO.” And yet, the law’s narrow definition of “bioengineered food” excludes many products that are in fact produced using GMOs. Non-GMO Project Verified remains the most technically rigorous and trusted label for GMO avoidance – the Butterfly is more important than ever.

HERE ARE FIVE THINGS TO KNOW:

1. THE BE LAW LARGELY DOES NOT ADDRESS NEW GMOS

The majority of emerging GMOs will not require a disclosure. That’s because the law focuses only on foods containing detectable modified genetic material in the final product. This excludes foods containing GMOs created through new techniques like CRISPR, for which no commercial lab tests currently exist. This denies consumers the right to actually know what’s in their food.

2. IT’S ABOUT DETECTION—NOT TRANSPARENCY

Because the law is concerned only with GMO presence in the final product, GMOs may be used during the upstream sourcing as long as processing makes them undetectable in the final product. Sugar, which is highly refined and can come from GMO sugar beets, is an example of this. Non-GMO Project verification evaluates for GMO avoidance in the supply chain as well as the final product, meeting consumers’ demands for transparency.

3. SHOPPERS AREN’T FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM “BIOENGINEERED”

Use of the opaque term “bioengineered,” along with the law’s inconsistent labeling requirements and lack of transparency, will likely generate confusion among consumers. Shoppers are looking for non-GMO products, not foods that contain them. The Butterfly seal stands out as a very clear and trustworthy statement of GMO avoidance.

4. IF YOU’RE REQUIRED TO MAKE A BE DISCLOSURE, YOU CAN’T CATCH THE BUTTERFLY

Foods that require a Bioengineered Food disclosure are not eligible for the Non-GMO Project verification mark. Now is the time to consider expanding your portfolio of Verified products. 1 in 3 shoppers prefer non-GMO food and products—and 64% are willing to pay a premium for non-GMO! The Butterfly is a clear and compelling statement of your brand’s stance on GMO transparency.

5. YOUR NON-GMO PROJECT VERIFICATION COULD SUPPORT COMPLIANCE WITH THE BE LAW

The Non-GMO Project Standard is intended to meet and exceed the requirements to avoid a BE disclosure. While Non-GMO Project verification does not automatically exempt a product from the regulation, documentation related to Non-GMO Project’s rigorous testing and verification process may assist in fulfilling the necessary requirements to avoid disclosure.

As the deadline approaches, connect with your regulatory and formulation teams to ensure compliance—and consider increasing your line of Verified products!