NATIONAL C-FAR
THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR FOOD & AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Program:

TO LABEL OR NOT TO LABEL

The Potential Impacts of Mandatory Labeling for Genetically Engineered Food in the United States

April 28, 2014
PROGRAM

Welcome and Introduction

LINDA CHIMENTI
NATIONAL C-FAR REPRESENTATIVE

Distinguished Speaker

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Open Forum

Closing

LINDA CHIMENTI

NATIONAL C-FAR IS a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based and customer-led coalition that brings food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation and natural resource stakeholders together with the food and agriculture research and extension community, serving as a forum and a unified voice in support of sustaining and increasing public investment at the national level in food and agricultural research, extension, and education. For additional information, go to www.ncfar.org; or contact Tom Van Arsdall, Executive Director, at tom@vanarsdall.com.
ABSTRACT
Although genetically engineered (GE) products are used around the world, their use in food products has become a contentious issue for some consumers. A key point in the resulting debate centers on proposals regarding the mandatory labeling of GE food. Many U.S. states are considering legislation to mandate such labels. This publication outlines arguments for and against labels, the costs involved with process-based labeling, and experiences in countries that use mandatory GE labeling. The authors start from the premise that hundreds of independent studies have determined that foods made using GE ingredients are safe. They gather factual information to produce a peer-reviewed publication that clarifies the potential impacts of mandatory labeling. Proponents of mandatory GE labeling cite the right to know what is in their food as an important attribute of a democratic society. Opponents argue that voluntary market-based labeling currently provides consumers who wish to avoid GE food with that choice, and that mandatory GE labeling will increase the cost of food for all consumers with no associated improvement in human health or food safety. Seemingly contradictory studies are cited to support opposing views—informed discourse about this emotional issue is hard to find. The authors examine key aspects of the arguments, as well as legal issues and economic impacts, and finish with a call for better communication about the issue.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY
Dr. Alison Van Eenennaam is an Animal Genomics and Biotechnology Cooperative Extension Specialist in the Department of Animal Science at the University of California, Davis. Her publicly funded research and outreach program focuses on the use of animal genomics and biotechnology in livestock production systems. Her current research projects include the development of genomic approaches to select for cattle that are less susceptible to disease and applied uses of DNA-based information on commercial beef cattle operations. She also has a keen interest in making publicly accessible educational materials and uses a variety of media to inform general public audiences about science and technology. She has provided a credentialed voice on some controversial topics including cloning and genetically engineered animals. She earned her B.S. from the University of Melbourne in Australia, and both her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees were earned from the University of California, Davis, in animal science and genetics, respectively.
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