



GMO Policy (effective June 1, 2013)

Due to the introduction of genetically modified crops into our food system, and the lack of mandatory labeling regulations, it has become difficult to know for certain if foods are truly free of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). We recognize that our members are concerned about the potential negative health and environmental effects of GMOs. They expect to be able to find products that are free of GMOs at our stores and we are endeavoring to meet that expectation to the best of our ability. In addition, we feel we can strongly influence vendors and regulatory agencies to label GMOs if we band together with other co-ops.

In order to influence the regulation of GMO labeling, we are no longer knowingly accepting NEW non-organic¹ products that include GMO high-risk items in their ingredient list, *unless* they are verified by The Non-GMO Project² or can provide to us a detailed description of the measures they have taken to avoid GMO contamination. With the exception of WIC³ items, this new policy applies to all ingestible products.

Non-organic crops at high risk for being GMO include, but are not limited to:

canola (rapeseed)	soy	zucchini
corn	sugar Beets	yellow summer squash
cotton	papaya (from Hawaii)	apples (coming soon)

Non-organic ingredients derived from crops at high risk for being GMO include, but are not limited to:

amino acids	hydrolyzed vegetable protein	sodium citrate
artificial flavoring	lactic acid	soy lecithin
ascorbic acid	maltodextrin	spices
aspartame	molasses	Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP)
citric acid	monosodium glutamate	vitamin C
corn starch	natural flavoring	vitamin capsules
ethanol	natural spices	xanthan gum
high-fructose corn syrup	sodium ascorbate	yeast products

Animals at high risk for being genetically engineered include, but are not limited to:

Salmon (coming soon)		
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**This policy does not apply to animals that are fed GMO feed, only animals that are genetically engineered.*

In addition to basic purchasing, we will do the following to further pressure vendors to label GMO products:

- a) We will no longer promote products that are at high risk for containing GMOs on end caps or in stacks; this applies to all products, not just new products, and includes promotional programs such as Speed-to-Market.
- b) We will work to ensure that all Co-op private label products—not just new products—are free from ingredients that are at high risk for containing GMOs.
- c) We will work to ensure that all products—not just new products—used in our Bakery and Deli recipes are free from high risk GMO ingredients.
- d) We will not include products that are at high risk for containing GMO ingredients in our Co-op Basics program; this applies to all products, not just new products.
- e) We will not carry products that are themselves, nor contain ingredients made from, genetically engineered animals; this applies to all products, not just new products.

We realize that in two stores with thousands of products, an ever changing landscape in organic practices, and the introduction of new GMO products regularly, we will need to make our GMO policy a living document that changes over time with each new development. We intend to enlist the help of our membership to aid in identifying high risk GMO ingredients in order to maintain educational materials for use in employee training and member education.

At some point, if a vendor decides to voluntarily label their non-organic, non-Non-GMO Project verified product as containing GMOs, we will allow that product on our shelves. Our goal with this policy is to influence labeling; if vendors voluntarily label GMO ingredients, then we have met our objective of providing transparency for our shoppers. The Co-op strives to provide education and information allowing the customer to make an informed decision. The exception, however, is in our Prepared Food (deli and bakery) and Meat departments, in which we are working to ensure recipes are free from ingredients at high risk for containing GMOs, whether they are labeled GMO or not.

At which time vendors begin to voluntarily label their ingredients as GMO, or a government mandate is set, we will reassess the need for this policy.

¹For the purposes of this policy, “organic” refers to “100% USDA organic,” “95% USDA organic,” “organic,” “made with organic ingredients” and includes other certifying agencies such as Oregon Tilth or CCOF. According to the USDA’s National Organic Program, even the non-organic ingredients in organic products must be GMO- free.

²The Non-GMO Project is a nonprofit multi-stakeholder collaboration committed to preserving and building sources of non-GMO products, educating consumers, and providing verified non-GMO choices. The Non-GMO Project Verified Seal indicates products have been produced according to rigorous best practices for GMO avoidance, including testing of high-risk ingredients. The North Coast Co-op is enrolled as a Supporting Retailer with the Non-GMO Project in order to provide non-organic non-GMO options for our customers, as well as to provide educational material for how to avoid GMOs. In addition, the most up-to-date information regarding non-GMO options can be found at www.nongmoproject.org.

³WIC refers to the USDA’s supplemental nutrition program called Women, Infants and Children, which serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. The North Coast Co-op is a participating retailer in the WIC California program.