Trends Point to Declining U.S. GMO Sales

For the first time since their introduction in 1996, the number of acres with planted GMO crops and the value of GMO seeds has declined. Down to 444 million acres in 2015 from 448.5 million in 2014, the overall acreage declined by a rate of about 1%. That's not a huge percentage change, but the reasons behind the decline bode well for the current push to label, minimize, and ideally eliminate genetically modified crops. It's good news for those opposed to GMOs and here's why.

There are three nations growing about 75% of GMOs. The U.S. grows the largest portion of GMOs in the world with over 175 million acres dedicated to modified corn, soybeans, canola, sugar beets, and other crops. But they're also responsible for the biggest decline – 5.4 million acres. In contrast, Argentina and Brazil, the other nations responsible for the bulk of GMOs, actually experienced a growth in the number of acres planted, more than five million acres between them.

For those looking to keep the U.S. decline going, the big question is why. Organizations monitoring these numbers cite a saturated market and a decrease in the value and price for commodity crops like corn and soybeans. While that's a stock answer, digging a little deeper reveals a landscape changing for the better in the U.S. Vermont has passed a labeling law. Massive food companies like Campbell's and General Mills have committed to labeling to their products in stores, and newly developed GM apples and potatoes have been unable to gain traction with large corporate customers like McDonald's and Wendy's. In addition, sales of processed foods are down overall, indicating a population that wants to be healthier.

For everyone who claims that labeling GMOs won't be an issue

for sales as consumers know they’re safe thanks to science (spoiler alert: no, not on your life), it doesn’t matter. Whether or not people purposefully reject GM foods, choosing fewer processed foods accomplishes the same thing as rejecting genetically modified crops, as an estimated 70% of processed foods contain GMOs.

When You Can No Longer Stuff 5 Pounds of Poop in a 10 Pound Bag

Another reason for the decline of GMO acreage? The lack of acreage left to expand to. The notion that acreage expansion is becoming less feasible for bio-tech crops due to them already being everywhere is a bittersweet one. No more GMOs? Great! No more room for anything? Alarming. There is only so much usable farmland over the world, and the nearly two decades of growth has taken much of that.

Unfortunately, that land can never be returned to its previous condition due in large part to wholesale pesticide use that has drastically reduced beneficial microbes in the soil and the degraded quality of topsoil. Still, there is a silver lining. More countries are banning or limiting the amount of GMOs grown within their borders. While it might still be too late, these measures can do something to preserve the resources we have left in the face of an increasingly uncertain future.

Keep the Momentum Going

Bio-tech companies are introducing more strains of GM plants as a way to diversify and expand their market, including new strains of cowpeas aimed at reducing hunger in Africa. But is this diversification a good thing? In reality, the decline in GMO acreage has more benefits than detriments, as the agricultural business itself is the one that needs to

diversify (and not just offer a non-bruising apple). Supporting a system that spends a massive amount of money on commodity crops that produce little actual nutrition is causing damage that we're not sure we can fix. There isn't enough evidence to support the claim that GMOs can or will end world hunger, certainly not enough to counteract the environmental devastation and probable health risks.

The effects of saying no to GMO food are both charitable and selfish. Fewer GMOs means less processed food, which makes you feel better. Fewer GMOs also means room for greater crop diversity, less power in the pockets of big agriculture, and fewer small farmers stuck in a cycle of paying for seeds prior to each planting and increasing their use of increasingly ineffective herbicides and pesticides. The win is there. Let's keep spreading the love around.

Recommended Reading:

- *Scientists Against GMOs – Hear From Those Who Have Done the Research*
- *Understanding and Detoxifying Genetically Modified Foods*
- *How to Detoxify From Antibiotics and Other Chemical Antimicrobials*
- *Candida, Gut Flora, Allergies, and Disease*
- *Heal Cavities, Gum Disease, Naturally with Organic Oral Care – Toothpaste recipes included*

Sources:

- *Acres For Genetically Modified Crops Declined in 2015 – nytimes.com*
- *Is The Era of Big Food Coming to An End – theguardian.com*
- *Understanding and Detoxifying Genetically Modified Foods – organiclifestylemagazine.com*
- *GE Crops and Unsustainable Agricultural Practices are Destroying Our Planet's Soil and Food Supply* – mercola.com