



Day 19: Non-GMO

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Item #1: Cheerios

- In 2014, General Mills announced that Cheerios were becoming **GMO-free** (Cheerios has since stopped using **GMO corn starch**)
- The issue of **GMO-labelling** has been controversial for General Mills. The company paid over **\$1 million in opposition to a law** which would require all products made with **GMO-products to be clearly labelled, so, indeed, General Mills's decision was a surprise**



“Original Cheerios in its famous yellow box will now be non-GMO and this victory sends a message to all food companies that consumers are increasingly looking for non-GMO products and companies need to meet that demand.”

**-Green America Corporate Responsibility
Director Todd Larsen**





Item #2: Nature Valley Granola Bars

- Not non-GMO project verified, not certified organic
- Contains **High Risk Ingredients:**
 - 1.) **CANOLA OIL**
 - 2.) **SOY**




Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 Bars (42g)	
Amount Per Container (6)	
Total Fat	10g 20%
Saturated Fat	2g 4%
Trans Fat	0g 0%
Cholesterol	0g 0%
Sodium	100mg 20%
Total Carbohydrate	28g 56%
Dietary Fiber	3g 6%
Sugar	12g 24%
Protein	3g 6%

Ingredients: Whole Grain Oats, Sugar, Canola Oil, Rice Flour, Honey, Salt, Brown Sugar Syrup, Baking Soda, Soy Lecithin, Natural Flavor, **CONTAINS SOY. MAY CONTAIN PEANUT, ALMOND AND PECAN INGREDIENTS.**

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www.naturevalley.com
[Contains Soy]

During a recent lawsuit, Nature Valley was sued for labelling its granola bars as 100% natural despite evidence that the product contains glyphosate, a potentially toxic ingredient found in the common weed killer Roundup



Item #3: Larabars

- All Larabars are **Non-GMO certified**
- Larabar makes a special line of **organic bars**



Recently, Larabar was acquired by General Mills. While General Mills has seen a decline in some of its less health and eco-conscious products (Yoplait, Pillsbury, Progresso etc.), sales of more eco-conscious products (such as Larabar) have increased, suggesting that consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their food purchases.



Reaction

I found it surprising how many major food brands (even those that are known for being particularly eco-conscious) have recently started to sell more non-GMO/organic products. It is likely that this reflects increasing customer demand for products that are better both for the environment/for consumers' health. For instance, with a product like Cheerios, known for being the classic baby/early childhood snack, it is understandable how pressure from concerned parents (and the threat of a decrease in sales) likely motivated Cheerios to make their products GMO-free. However, not all products (such as Nature Valley granola bars) have given into the demands of non-GMO seeking consumers. It is a little disconcerting that the scientific evidence on the health impacts of GMOs is not entirely conclusive. If GMOs were to be directly linked to health complications, one would hope that the government would intervene and ensure that food products in the US are safe for consumption. However, given the power of major food corporations which may rely on GMOs for the production of their products, it is hard to rest assured that the government will take action, should conclusive scientific evidence motivate them to do so, in banning GMOs from all products in the US.

Alternatives

1.) Cascadian Farms Organics, Purely O's Cereal

***non-GMO and organic certified (made with non-GMO oats and barley)**

2.) Bobo's Original Oat Bars

***non-GMO certified (made with organic coconut oil and GMO-free sugar and oats)**

2.) *Larabars already seem to be one of the most eco and socially-conscious granola bar options



NOTE: It is important to note that there is a relatively significant price difference between the original products and their non-GMO counterparts. It's somewhat of a luxury to be able to afford organic/sustainable/non-GMO products. This financial barrier is something that has to be addressed should we want to make these types of eco-conscious decisions truly accessible for all.



Graphic:

Nature Valley Granola Bars



- **NO** organic/non-GMO certification
- \$0.28/ounce

Bobo's Original Bars



- non-GMO certified
- \$0.94/ounce

Cheerios



- Just recently became non-GMO certified
- \$0.39/ounce

Cascadian Farms Purely O's



- non-GMO and organic certified
- \$0.52/ounce



Opinion

To be perfectly honest, after reading multiple articles about GMOs, I am feeling a little conflicted. Especially given our rapidly increasing population, there is a pressing need to create solutions that will enable us to produce the food needed to sustain this growing population (and GMOs hold the potential to help us grow more resilient crops more efficiently). But, that being said, GMOs may not be the most ecologically sound way to address this problem. Engineering more resilient crops could encourage further use of harmful, disease-causing pesticides. This pesticide-use has been linked to several very serious long-term health complications.

To make matters more complicated, the lobbying power of major food corporations makes it incredibly challenging to obtain unbiased facts about the safety of GMOs. (continued on next slide)



Opinion (part 2)

This challenge reminded me that, every time I purchase a product, I am essentially casting a vote for the type of corporation I support. By purchasing GMO-free products, consumers are voicing their support for an ecologically-sound way of farming. However, given that a fairly significant price difference does exist between GMO and non-GMO products, the purchase of these eco-conscious products continues to feel like somewhat of a luxury. Corporations must continue to strive to create products that are both eco-friendly and affordable so that money doesn't remain a boundary excluding some from the environmental movement.

Social Media Post

