

Labeling of Foods Containing Genetically Modified Ingredients

Statement of Task (SOT): At the request of the legislature, the Washington State Academy of Sciences will provide an independent white paper addressing the science underlying the use of products from genetically modified plants and/or animals in food and the impacts of required labeling of foods containing ingredients from genetically modified plants and/or animals. The evaluation will address the following questions:

1. *Definitions:* What products from genetically modified plants and animals are currently used to produce food ingredients? How do these plants and animals differ from non-genetically modified plants and animals?
2. *Nutrition:* How do the ingredients derived from genetically modified plants and animals that are incorporated into food differ from ingredients from non-genetically modified plants and animals? Do foods incorporating ingredients derived from genetically modified plants and animals differ in nutritional value as compared to foods incorporating ingredients from non-genetically modified plants and animals?
3. *Food Safety:* Do foods incorporating ingredients derived from genetically modified plants and animals differ in safety, including infectious and non-infectious determinants, as compared to foods incorporating ingredients from non-genetically modified plants and animals.
4. *Policy and Trade:* How would a requirement for labeling be or not be congruent with existing labeling laws and trade regulations, both national and international? How likely is a labeling requirement to decrease or increase the price of food for consumers in the State of Washington? How likely is a labeling requirement to decrease or increase agricultural and processed food market opportunities and prices, within the State of Washington and for national and global exports?
5. *Regulation and Enforcement:* How will compliance be monitored and enforced? What are estimated costs associated with effective oversight and enforcement?