



Not in My Food.org

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New Ads Opposing Measure 92 are Full of Misinformation

Residents of Oregon, beware: Opponents of Oregon's genetically modified organism (GMO) labeling ballot initiative, Measure 92, have begun to fill the airwaves with misinformation.

Oregon will vote soon on whether to pass Measure 92, which requires a label on foods with GMOs. Yesterday, big-business opponents of the Oregon measure started an advertising blitz to kill it – and their ads are flat wrong.

Their arguments just don't stand up, and we're here to debunk them one by one.

- THE ADS CLAIM: Farmers will have to spend "millions" to comply with the law.

THE TRUTH: The law won't hurt farmers and retailers. The law only states that farmers are responsible for labeling shipments of raw foods, and that foods containing GMOs have to be labeled. Under the proposed law, farmers and retailers won't get in trouble unless they're knowingly lying about what's in their food.

- THE ADS CLAIM: Labels won't indicate which ingredients contain GMOs.

THE TRUTH: A box of breakfast cereal may contain half a dozen or more ingredients, but what consumers want to know is whether the product they're purchasing contains genetically engineered ingredients or not, so they can avoid it if they want. The labels will give you that information.

- THE ADS CLAIM: Foods will be labeled, even if they don't have GMOs.

THE TRUTH: The labeling opponents don't offer any evidence in their ads in support of this. Biotech companies sometimes argue that a product like soybean oil doesn't contain any DNA from the soybean, so it isn't actually a GMO. But clearly it is a product of a GMO and thus should be covered by any labeling law.



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- THE ADS CLAIM: “Thousands” of products, like meat, dairy, restaurant and take-out foods, and alcohol that contain GMOs won’t be labeled.

THE TRUTH: Regarding meat and dairy, the claim is false. Any meat and dairy product that came from an animal that was itself genetically engineered would have to be labeled. Although currently there aren’t any foods from genetically engineered animals on the market, a GE salmon could be approved soon, and under Measure 92 it would have to be labeled in Oregon. Measure 92 would not require a label on meat from animals that ate genetically engineered feed, but that doesn’t make them genetically engineered. Restaurant and take-out food are not covered, but they are commonly treated differently than processed food products – they don’t have nutrition labels either. Beer, wine and alcohol are not covered because they’re not foods.

- THE ADS CLAIM: The measure will be costly for consumers and food producers.

THE TRUTH: Labeling will not increase food prices. Food companies change labels all the time without raising prices. Industry-funded studies that claim large price increases are based on improbable scenarios, such as that food companies will start making all of their foods from GMO-free or organic ingredients – which is not required by the law and is highly unlikely.

Measure 92 is a well-written, common sense initiative that will give consumers power to make the right choices for their families. They deserve to know whether their foods contain GMOs. The FDA doesn’t require safety testing of GMOs before they are put on the market. We think consumers should be able to avoid them if they want.

Consumers Union, the policy and advocacy arm of Consumer Reports, is a non-profit organization that serves only consumers and receives no corporate support. We strongly support Measure 92. According to a recent Consumer Reports poll, 92% of Americans favor GMO labeling.