

# Bioethi

## Alien DNA in Your Food?

Many food crops contain DNA that has been genetically engineered into them from other species. Some varieties of corn, for example, have had genes from certain bacteria, fungi, or insects inserted into them. Some new varieties of corn contain foreign DNA that codes for proteins that act as pesticides. When attacked by certain insects, the new corn proteins kill the corn pests. Do you know whether or not you are eating corn that produces these proteins? Do you care?

Many people *do* care. There has been considerable outcry against GMOs. The GMO controversy regularly appears in the news as factions of the public demand public debate.

Europe has seen many public demonstrations against genetically engineered food crops. The politicians in several European nations have passed laws requiring labeling on food products containing GMOs. In the United States, there has been publicity on the anti-GMO movement, but the public as a whole has not shown much concern about GMOs and foods containing them.

### Do you have a pro-GMO, anti-GMO, or neutral position?

Before beginning the following activity, write a paragraph that 1) defines the term "genetically modified food"; and 2) describes your "gut reaction" to eating genetically engineered food. Does it bother you? Yes or no? Why or why not?

1. Using Internet resources, find 10 food crops (plant, animal, fungi, or bacteria) that have been genetically modified through the addition of DNA.
2. For each of the 10 food crops, list three food products that could be manufactured using each of these GMOs. Think about products that you can buy in a grocery store.
3. Decide which foods you would not eat if you knew that they were genetically engineered. Are there any foods that you are willing to give up? Are there any that you are not willing to give up?
4. Organize your information and decisions on a chart.
5. Discuss why genetic enhancement of food crops is so controversial.