

Feed me the Truth

Action Guide

Introduction

Until 2013 most UK supermarkets did not allow the use of genetically modified (GM) crops to produce their eggs, milk, dairy products, poultry, red meat or farmed fish products. However, that has all changed and GM animal feed is now the norm.



This means that if you buy non-organic eggs, milk, dairy products, poultry, red meat or farmed fish products they have most likely been fed a GM diet (we are calling these 'GM-fed products') and you are supporting GM crops without even knowing it. Products from GM-fed animals do not need to be labelled so you can't avoid this hidden GM – unless the supermarket gives you the information you need to choose.

Help us expose the hidden GM in the food chain and reverse this policy. Tell supermarkets to Feed you the Truth and remove GM from the supply chain altogether.

What's happening?

We want to generate enough public interest in this issue to persuade 10 large UK supermarkets and food stores to improve the information they provide to customers and to increase the number of non GM-fed animal products on sale.

The 10 are: Aldi, Asda, the Co-operative, Iceland, Lidl, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose (see Annex 2). We have chosen to focus on these as they have significant control over their own-brand supply chains and can be ranked against each other.

We have ranked supermarkets according to:

- Their policies – we want to see a firm commitment to phasing out the use of GM animal feed
- The information they provide to customers – it doesn't have to be on the label but we want everyone to be able to find out easily which products come from GM-fed animals and which do not
- The number of non GM-fed animal products they stock – we want this to increase.

We will award supermarkets up to five stars for achieving our criteria against all three issues. So far most UK supermarkets barely reach one star and several have told us that their customers are not concerned about GM animal feed. Help us to show them how wrong they are!

Supermarkets are led by their customers which is why their own brand products don't contain GM ingredients. Together we can pile on the pressure and persuade them that GM-fed is bad for business too.

What you can do

There is plenty you can do to help. You can take action from home, you can ask questions when you're shopping or help make a noise on social media like Facebook and Twitter.

1) Help raise awareness in your area

You can order our free leaflet *Feed: the hidden GM on your plate* for distribution in your local area. Maybe there are community information stalls or events where you could hand these out, or work with others to set one up. Just tell info@gmfreeze.org what you need.



2) Talk to the supermarkets in your area

Can your supermarkets give you clear, consistent and coherent information about whether or not **their own brand eggs, milk, dairy products, poultry, red meat or farmed fish products are GM-fed?**

Find out by writing to them or by asking a store manager.

- Be polite – ask in a civilised manner and get straight to the point. A short, polite letter usually gets better results than a long or angry one.
- Explain why you are writing and what you would like done about it. The content should contain enough details so that the recipient does not have to write back requesting more. **NOTE:** Remember you are writing about non-organic animal feed – don't get fobbed off with replies about GM ingredients, or the fact that their organic ranges are non GM-fed – they have to be so that's really missing the point!
- It's also a good idea to thank the company for dealing with your complaint as it ends the letter in a positive manner.

Make sure you've got the latest [Products Table](#) before settling on what you want to write.

www.feedmethetruth.org

What do we mean by own brand?

This campaign is focused on own brand products because supermarkets have more control over how they are made. They should say that they are made by that supermarket and carry the supermarket logo.

For example, Sainsbury's *Taste the Difference* product lines are all Sainsbury's own brand products.

The product may also say that it was made or packed for that particular supermarket, as in the image on the right.



Tell them that you want better information about what is GM-fed; and that you want to buy non GM-fed own brand products.

Please share your findings on social media and tag the campaign #FeedmeTheTruth. If the information you receive in response is different from what you can see in our products table [link or image], get in touch so that so we can adjust our ranking or help you take further action if the information you have been given turns out to be incorrect.

3) Go wild on social media

If you use Facebook and Twitter then please find and Like or Follow GM Freeze. Please also sign up to our email alert list here: www.gmfreeze.org/emails.

We will regularly share campaign updates as we go and you can help us make even more noise by sharing our posts and tagging the supermarkets so that they notice (see the contact sheet in the Annex).

We're using the simple visual effect of a blindfold to highlight the fact that we are being kept in the dark about GM animal feed.

Any strip of material will do, a narrow scarf or even a tie, just so long as it's comfortable to wear and shows up in a photo.

This is where your creative side can go wild!

Good quality photos and/or short videos of your actions can help you reach a much wider audience, especially online. If you can, find a good photographer or a friend who can photograph or film your activities for you to share online. We have found that taking selfies with a blindfold on is rather tricky!

If you have any own brand animal products from the 10 supermarkets, or one of their bags-for-life then you can photograph yourself at home and share your picture online.

If you'd like to take more targeted actions at a particular store make sure you take a blindfold and a friend/photographer with you. Take a picture of you shopping inside with a trolley or standing outside the store, holding a relevant own brand product and share this on social media asking if it is GM-fed. Make sure that the supermarket's branding is visible and that you are focusing on the right products (see our table for details www.feedmethetruth.org).

Post your picture on Facebook pages:

Some supermarket Facebook pages will let you write a post and add your picture directly onto their page (you usually need to 'Like' their page first). However most often this will not show on the public page so it's usually better to comment on one of the supermarket's own posts. This will work best if you can find a reasonably sensible link between what they are trying to promote and the comments you want to make but do be creative and include your picture where possible. The key thing is to make it clear that you want to buy more non GM-fed eggs, milk, other dairy, poultry, meat or farmed fish products.

Go tweet, tweet on Twitter:

Use your own words, but **please use our hashtag #FeedmeTheTruth, tag the store using its twitter handle and tag @GMFreeze too if you have room.** Images no longer count against your 140 characters so do include a picture whenever you can. We know from experience that tweets including photos or videos are much more likely to be noticed and shared.

Some examples could be:

@Tesco Does my Tesco-brand milk come from #GMfed cows? #feedmethetruth and please no #GMO

Expected better from @marksandspencer #GMfed meat and no mention on the label #feedmethetruth Please no #GMO



Post your picture on the supermarket's Facebook page with a comment like:

Love the double cream, Waitrose, but were the cows fed GM? www.feedmethetruth.org

Or post your picture with a tweet like:

@waitrose Has my double cream come from #GMfed cows? #FeedmeTheTruth and please no #GMO





Involve others

If you have contacts with community groups perhaps you could encourage them to get involved? You could organise a photo stunt with a group of blindfolded people outside a particular supermarket and make sure you get the supermarket's logo in the shot. Blindfold statues or other structures to get even more creative. Consider what might get media coverage and attract the public's attention and gather good photos or video footage to share online. Ask us if we can help by providing animal costumes or other props and if you think you might have a really good press story, give us a call so that we can talk through the best way to handle media interest.

Spread the word

We can help you reach out to other groups too. If you organise an event on this or a related issue, we can other supporters know and invite them to attend. If it suits your event we might even be able to provide a speaker.

Tell your local press

Whatever you are planning to do, please consider contacting your local media with a press release or by writing to the Letters Editor of your local paper. Let them know what you are going to do, invite them to attend a photo stunt and look out for other local stories that you can link in to the issue of GM animal feed. Send them a high quality picture of any action you take and make sure they know that this is a hot issue for their readers.

See these resources from GM Freeze member Friends of the Earth for more tips on writing press releases and to Letter Editors:

https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/cyw_64_press_release.pdf

https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/cyw_60_letter_in_paper.pdf

For updates and information on progress about the campaign, please bookmark our campaign page:

www.feedmethetruth.org

Some questions to answer

What's wrong with GM crops?

Genetically modified (GM) crops support some of the most environmentally damaging farming practices in the world. The most common crop is Roundup Ready soya, which is designed to survive being sprayed with large doses of the weedkiller glyphosate. According to the World Health Organisation, glyphosate probably causes cancer. The use of GM crops has led to the development of resistant "super-weeds" and has been proven to reduce biodiversity. They give big business even more control over the food that we eat.

Why should I care what farm animals eat?

If you are concerned about the spread of GM then you should care about animal feed. The vast majority of GM crops grown around the world are used for feeding the animals that produce our non-organic eggs, milk, other dairy, poultry, meat or farmed fish products. These crops are typically grown in highly intensive ways, damaging the environment and reducing biodiversity. They don't have to be mentioned on the label of the foods they go to produce so consumers are not able to make an informed choice.

Is non GM animal feed available?

Yes, non GM feed crops are grown around the world and if the supermarkets specify non GM then that is what will be grown. Supermarket representatives may tell you that GM-free is too difficult to find, but we don't accept that. US and German brand names and large supermarkets (like Danone, Arla and Lidl) are returning to GM-free animal feed in response to consumer pressure.

ANNEX 1: Our five star standard

POLICY		INFORMATION		PRODUCT AVAILABILITY		STAR
Recognises GM animal feed as an area of concern, either to consumers or in relation to company's own ethical standards	+	GM Freeze is able to access basic information about GM-fed products from published information or contact with company representatives	+	Non GM-fed own brand product lines* are usually available in most stores in at least 1 category (eggs, milk, dairy products, poultry, red meat or farmed fish).	=	1
Policy commitment to investigating and developing non GM-fed supply lines for own brand products	+	GM Freeze is able to access detailed information about GM-fed products from published information or contact with company representatives AND Consumers tell us they have been able to access basic information about GM-fed products when making proactive inquiries to company representatives	+	Non GM-fed own brand product lines* are usually available in most stores in at least 3 categories (eggs, milk, dairy products, poultry, red meat, farmed fish).	=	2
Policy commitment to excluding GM animal feed from some non-organic own brand products	+	Consumers are able to find detailed information on the company website, its social media, in store or by contacting Customer Services, about which products are GM-fed	+	Non GM-fed own brand product lines* are usually available in most stores in at least 4 categories (eggs, milk, dairy products, poultry, red meat, farmed fish). AND All own brand products in at least 1 category are non GM-fed.	=	3
Policy commitment to phasing out GM animal feed from all own brand products	+		+	Non GM-fed own brand product lines* are usually available in most stores in all 6 categories AND All own brand products in at least 3 categories are non GM-fed.	=	4
Policy commitment to exclude GM animal feed from all own brand products	+		+	All own brand products non GM-fed	=	5

* must be non-organic where non-organic lines are sold

ANNEX 2: Supermarket contacts

Matthew Barnes
Director
Aldi Stores Ltd
Holly Lane
Atherstone
Warwickshire
CV9 2SQ
@AldiUK

Sean Clarke
Chief Executive
Asda - Walmart UK
Asda House
Southbank
Great Wilson Street
Leeds LS11 5AD
@asda

Richard Pennycook
Chief Executive
The Cooperative Group
1 Angel Square
Manchester M60 0AG
@coopukfood

Malcolm Walker
Chief Executive
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@IcelandFoods

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Chief Executive
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Managing Director
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Steve Rowe
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Dave Lewis
Chief Executive
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Tesco House
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Kestrel Way
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