



GAZETTE

Monday, June 5, 2017

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The Meaning of USDA

Organic

Presented by Al Johnson, VP of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey

What is the process that has gone into the organic claim of a farm field or a jar of tomato sauce? We will start with a brief overview of organic agriculture. We will then look at the history of the organic movement, the development and evolution of organic certification from small state programs to one overseen and regulated by the Federal Government. Finally, we will answer these questions: What is the certification process all about and how does it work? What does it mean to people growing our food and consuming our food? What have been the benefits of the USDA Organic program and what are the problems?

about Al Johnson:

Al farmed and market gardened organically for 12 years and has now been an inspector of organic farms and food processing plants for 28 years. The original organic certification standards for New Jersey were written on his kitchen table. He has been on the Standards/Policy Boards for at least one certification agency since 1989 and is currently the VP of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey. He is an avid organic gardener and teaches workshops throughout the northeast.

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From The Chair:

We were very fortunate that IFT President, Dr. John Coupland spoke at our last meeting. He gave us tips on engaging those who are not technical, on how to introduce them to what we do in the food industry and to listen to their concerns, as well.

We will finish up our year with Al Johnson speaking to us about FDA Organic.

I enjoyed this year's speakers. The topics covered a broad section of our industry, and we will continue to present speakers next year, that will provide a variety of topics to our membership. Let us know what speakers interest you. Call us, we will be glad to listen to your suggestions.

Looking forward to next season!
Frank Vollaro for the Executive Board

Upcoming meetings:

**IFT National Meeting
June 25-28, Las Vegas, NV.**

**"Flavor Interactions in Foods,"
Pre IFT meeting short course
June 24-25**

**go to www.ift.org
for information on all IFT short courses,
before the meeting, and for information
on the annual meeting**

check out our website: www.longislandift.org

MEETING PLACE & DIRECTIONS

Date: Monday, June 5, 2017

**Place: The Inn at New Hyde Park
214 Jericho Tpk.
New Hyde Park, N.Y. 11040**

Directions: go to www.innatnhp.com

**Times: 6:00PM-7:00PM, cash bar, networking
7:00PM- 8:00PM, dinner
8:00PM- speaker**

**Price: \$40.00 per person with reservation
\$50.00 per person at the door**

**Reservations: Carol Zamojcin @ 516-352-5772,
anytime before Fri. June 2nd.**

Can You Afford To Go Non-GMO?

Can you afford not to? Sourcing non-GMO ingredients is becoming easier but not (yet) cheaper.

By Lauren R. Harman, Product Development Editor
Food Processing, March 2017

After the passing of the GMO labeling bill in 2016, which requires processors to start labeling for the presence of GMOs in mid-2018, the fervor over genetic modification isn't going away. GMOs are created using gene-splicing techniques, which allow DNA from one species to be injected into another species in a lab. In theory, they're more environmentally friendly because they conserve water, soil and energy, and increase yields. The FDA and the science community have declared them safe.

Many consumers disagree [*Ed.note: I would like these consumers to share with me the science they used, to arrive at their conclusion that GMO foods are not safe.*] As a result, more and more products are sporting or seeking a non-GMO label claim. Annual sales of non-GMO certified products increased from \$349 million in 2010 to more than \$19 billion as of March 2016, according to Packaged Facts (www.packagedfacts.com), Rockville, MD. Demand is expected to grow 12 percent annually through 2018. [*Science or no science, consumers want what they want, and that is the bottom line. I think it would be a tough nut to crack, to reverse that trend.*]

Crops that have the highest likelihood of containing GMOs are alfalfa, canola, corn, cotton, papaya, soy, sugar beet, yellow summer squash and zucchini, according to the Non-GMO Project (www.nongmoproject.org), Bellingham, Wash., which independently verifies that products are GMO free. As a result of the widespread use of corn and soy as ingredients, it's estimated GMOs are present in 70 to 80 percent of the foods consumed in the U.S. today—as well as most livestock feed.

Regardless of all the scientific evidence, GMO foods make the general public a bit apprehensive and skeptical. People want to know where their food comes from, and the shifts in American eating habits show the concerns about genetically modified foods and consumers' trust in organic ones. This, demand for non-GMO food is gathering

momentum.

Non-GMO claims are gathering traction on food and beverage labels, according to Chicago-based Mintel Group (www.mintel.com). The research firm's Global New Products Database tracked 15.7 percent of new U.S. food and beverage products making non-GMO claims in 2015, versus 2.8 percent in 2012. Interest in GMO-free foods among all consumers (27 percent) outweighs interest in foods free of soy (22 percent), nuts/peanut (20 percent) and eggs (17 percent).

The Non-GMO Project has a tolerance level of genetic modification of less than 0.9 percent, the same as European Union countries. Certifying at least 20,000 products so far, the organization requires ongoing testing of all at-risk ingredients — any ingredients being grown commercially in GMO form must be tested prior to use in a verified product. Verification also involves facility inspections and annual audits to ensure a company meets the highest standards currently available for GMO avoidance.

Thousands of retailers, ingredient suppliers, and food and beverage manufacturers have earned Non-GMO Project certification, and more earn it every day. The non-profit group has stated that determining the safety of GMO foods, requires studies “spanning generations.”

Ingredient suppliers join in

Responding to all that consumer interest, food developers are hunting for individual non-GMO ingredients. As a result, ingredient suppliers of everything from probiotics to spices are acquiring Non-GMO Project verification.

The first wave of certifications from the Non-GMO Project was for finished food products, but in the past year or two, ingredient suppliers have flooded the group with certification requests.

“The proper labeling of GMOs is in the spotlight,” observes Mike Bush, president of Ganeden, Inc. (www.ganedenprobiotics.com), Cleveland, Ohio, which became the first probiotic supplier to meet Non-GMO Project requirement strain GanedenBC.

Ingredion, Inc. (www.ingredion.us), which deals in many corn-based ingredients, has worked particularly hard at certification. In January, the Westchester, Ill.-based food company announced Non-GMO Project certification for nine products

in its Novation Prima, Novation Endura, Ultra-Crisp, and Globe brands of sweeteners, texturizing and nutrition products, bringing its total non-GMO ingredients to 57.

“Receiving the additional Non-GMO Project verification adds another layer of trust to our long non-GMO track record and broad portfolio of ingredients,” said Igor Playner, vice president of innovation and strategy for Ingredion North America. “As consumer demand grows, manufacturers can respond with products made from our Non-GMO Project Verified ingredient solutions that meet demand for clean and simple labels and deliver on the sensory experience.”

They’re not alone. Bunge North America (www.bungenorthamerica.com), St. Louis, Mo, obtained its first Non-GMO Project Verification for milled corn ingredients in 2016, followed by ancient grains millet, sorghum and quinoa.

The company’s Non-GMO Project Verified milled corn ingredients include grits, meals, flours and whole grains that may be used in cereals, savory snacks, baked goods and breadings/batters. Its Whole Harvest brand of canola and soybean oils, is also Non-GMO Project Verified and Bunge is pursuing verification for its rice, gluten-free breadings, ancient grains and puffed and expanded snacks. The company’s facility in Crete, Neb., is Non-GMO Project Verified, and a dry corn mill in Danville, Ill., considered the world’s largest, is currently undergoing project verification.

Bunge contracts with famers for non-bioengineered/non-GMO acreage, says Mark Stavro, senior director of marketing. “Some of our long-standing milled ingredients, like rice and rice panko are naturally non-GMO, followed by ancient grains—millet, sorghum and quinoa. We also have USDA-certified organic corn products.”

While there was lively debate over the subject, all organic products must be GMO-free.

Cargill (www.cargill.com) Wayzata, Minn., also began participation in the Non-GMO Project Verified program last year with erythritol and Clear Valley and IngreVita oils. Some of its other ingredients are expected to earn verification soon, confirms Mike Wagner, managing

director for Cargill Starches and Sweeteners North America.

Transparency, traceability are key

Since its founding in 2004, Kind Snacks (www.kindsnacks.com), New York, has sourced non-genetically engineered ingredients, notes Stephanie Perruzza, Kind’s registered dietician and health and wellness specialist. “Our Healthy Grains, breakfast bars, and Pressed by Kind lines are verified by the non-GMO Project, and the seal is found on most of our packaging,” she says. “We’re currently updating our packaging with the seal, and some of our other snacks are pending Non-GMO Project verification.”

For more than 20 years, WhiteWave Foods’ Horizon Organic brand (www.horizon.com) has worked with nearly 700 family farms nationwide to ensure its milk is organic and therefore non-GMO. With so much soy being genetically engineered, certified soy is harder to find. But the company’s Silk and So Delicious lines of plant-based “dairy” products are either verified by or enrolled in the Non-GMO Project, as are several Vega products, says Nate Meadows, director of procurement commodities.

“Some non-GMO ingredients are readily available, but [for others] availability really depends on the ingredient needed,” says Mike Ferry, WhiteWave president. “We partner with suppliers willing to work with us and support non-GMO alternatives.”

Visiting trade shows is a good way to find new suppliers and ingredient offerings, Meadows adds. The sourcing team cultivates relationships with non-GMO sources, and some suppliers proactively approach WhiteWave.

Other companies have successfully stopped using GMO ingredients. Jim St. John, master chocolatier and vice president of chocolate products development at Hershey Co. (www.hersheys.com), Hershey, Pa., says it was fairly easy to remove GMOs in its eponymous milk chocolate brand and Hershey Kisses.

Six of Nestle’s Outshine frozen fruit bars so far are made without GMOs and others are on the way.

Speaking of WhiteWave: Any day now, the company will become part of Damone (the acquisition is in its final phases). The French firm’s commitment to non-GMO ingredients is just as strong, and its Dannon USA unit promised to declare GMOs on its labels by December 2017. But Dannon USA’s aversion to GMOs extend to the grain being fed cows. Dannon committed early last year “to bring all products from

three flagship brands (Dannon, Oikos and Danimals) towards the use of fewer and more natural ingredients that are not synthetic and non-GMO. Importantly, Dannon also commits that for these brands, the feed of its farmers' cows will be non-GMO within a transition period of three years. The ambition is to evolve the remaining brands over time.”

Similarly, Ben & Jerry's (www.benjerry.com), South Burlington, Vt., promised to remove all GMO ingredients from its ice cream, but also pledged to work with its farmer-suppliers. The company relies primarily on traceability of ingredients through the supply chain back to a non-GMO seed. Its suppliers must take appropriate measures to segregate GMO and non-GMO materials or finished products in their production facilities “at all times and ensure proper cleaning measures are employed.”

Sourcing non-GMO ingredients can be a challenge in terms of pricing. Many of our sources agree, non-GMOs often command higher prices. With the July 2018 labeling mandate looming, it will be expensive enough for large companies to move to non-GMO ingredients, but the choice may be even tougher for small companies. Yet with many non-GMO ingredients already available and more in the certification pipeline, ingredient prices should come down.