

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS LABELLING

















How should my product be labelled in Asia?



Genetically modified (GM) food, also called genetically engineered (GE) food in some countries, are food that contain GM materials or are produced from gene-modified food materials. GM food labelling is a complex issue where international consensus has yet been reached.

Internationally, it is not accepted by most countries that labelling is not for food safety reasons but to provide consumers with choice. On the other hand, some countries regulate the labelling of GM foods but in different ways. It should be noted that a number of countries in Asia require mandatory labelling of GM food, while others do not require GMO labelling.

ASIA AT A GLANCE

Regulatory Status	Countries
Mandatory	         
Voluntary	
No Provision	    

CHINA

It is compulsory to label GM food in China.¹

GM planting seeds, breeding livestock, poultry, fish fry and microorganisms and products with genetically modified animal, plant or microbe ingredients such as planting seeds, breeding livestock, poultry, fish fry, pesticides, veterinary medicines, fertilizer and additives shall be directly labelled "genetically modified XX".

Products made directly from agricultural genetically modified organisms (Ag GMOs) shall be labelled "genetically modified XX products" or "with XX as raw materials".

Products made from Ag GMOs or materials with GM ingredients that no longer contain GM ingredients or the GM ingredients cannot be detected in the final products for sales shall be labelled "This product is made from genetically modified XX, but the product no longer contains genetically modified ingredients" or "This product uses genetically modified XX as raw materials, but the product no longer contains genetically modified ingredients"

HONG KONG

It is voluntary to label GM food in Hong Kong.²

Any food item with $\geq 5\%$ GM materials in their ingredients should be labelled as "genetically modified". Negative labelling (eg. "GM free") is not recommended to be used.

INDIA

It is compulsory to label GM food in India.³

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, formally implemented the Legal metrology (Packaged Commodities) Amendment Rules, 2012 as published in the Indian Official Gazette Notification No. G.S.R. 427(E), which stipulates that every package containing food derived from products of biotechnology shall bear at the top of its principal display panel the letters "GM."

It shall be noted that FSSAI is still in the process of establishing labelling regulations for GM foods.

¹ Wu, B. (2007, June 22). USDA Foreign Agricultural Service GAIN Report. Retrieved from: <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200706/146291495.pdf>

² Guidelines on Voluntary Labelling of Genetically Modified (GM) Food. (2006). Retrieved from: https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_gmf/programme_gmf_gi_label_index.html

³ Mandatory GM Labelling on Packaged Food (2013). JDIH BADANPOM. Retrieved from: https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/report/downloadreportbyfilename?filename=Mandatory%20GM%20Labeling%20on%20Packaged%20Food_New%20Delhi_India_1-15-2013.pdf

INDONESIA

It is compulsory to label GM food in Indonesia.⁴

GM food should be labelled as “GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD”.

JAPAN

It is mandatory to label certain GM ingredients (in Table 4 of [2016 Agriculture Biotechnology Annual](#)) in Japan.

Three types of genetically engineered (GE) claims may be made – non-GE, GE and non-segregated. Non-GE claims are voluntary, while GE and non-segregated claims are mandatory. Non-GE products must contain ≤ 5% of GE components.⁵

KOREA

It is compulsory to label GM food in Korea.⁶

All products containing detectable GM components should be labelled “GM Food”, “GM Food Additive”, “GM Health Functional Food”, “Food product containing GM Soy”, “Food Additives Containing GM Corn”, or “Health Functional Food Containing GM Corn”.

Non-GMO- or GMO-Free claims are permitted when the contents of raw ingredients subject to biotech labelling are 50% or higher, or when such ingredient is the top ingredient in volume of the product. It should be noted that there is zero tolerance for GM components in the final product.

Non-GMO- or GMO-Free claims are prohibited for products which do not have biotech counterparts.

MALAYSIA

It is compulsory to label GM food in Malaysia.⁷

Food and food ingredients obtained through modern biotechnology shall be labelled “genetically modified (name of ingredient)”, “produced from genetically modified (name of ingredient)” or “contains genetically modified ingredient” accordingly.

⁴ Regulation on Food Label and Advertisement. (1999). JDIH BADANPOM. Retrieved from: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/gmfp/docs/PP_No_69_th_1999.pdf

⁵ 2018 FAIRS Annual Country Report. (2018). GAIN. Retrieved from: https://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Tokyo_Japan_2-5-2019.pdf

⁶ Korea's New Biotech Labelling Requirements. (2017). GAIN. Retrieved from: https://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Korea's%20New%20Biotech%20Labeling%20Requirements_Seoul_Korea%20-%20Republic%20of_3-28-2017.pdf

⁷ Food Regulation 1985. (2018). Ministry of Health. Retrieved from: <http://fsq.moh.gov.my/v6/xs/dl.php?filename=730b5042d10be434b44c3165d1ec588b.pdf>

PHILIPPINES

It is compulsory to label GM food in Philippines.⁸

Food, food products and their derivatives and agricultural products that contain GMOs should be labelled as follows: "THIS PRODUCT CONTAINS GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS" or "THIS PRODUCT CONTAINS GMO".

The tolerance level for GMO is 0.9%.

SINGAPORE

As of 13 May 2019, 7 types of crops are [approved](#) as genetically modified crops which may be used as food ingredients in Singapore. This includes alfalfa, canola, cotton, maize, potato, soybean and sugarbeet. SFA is reviewing the requirement on labelling of GM food with the Genetic Modification Advisory Committee (GMAC). Labelling of GM is not required.

TAIWAN

It is compulsory to label GM Food in Taiwan.⁹

Food containing GMOs shall be labelled as "genetically-modified" or "with genetic modification".

Food which use GMOs directly during manufacturing but do not contain transgenic DNA fragments or transgenic proteins in the final product shall be labelled as follows: "genetically modified"; "with genetic modification"; "use genetically modified (organism name)"; "this product is made of genetically modified (organism name), but does not contain any transgenic DNA fragment or transgenic proteins"; "this product's raw materials contain genetically modified (organism name), but do not contain any transgenic DNA fragment or transgenic proteins"; "this product does not contain any transgenic DNA fragment or transgenic proteins, but is made of genetically modified (organism name)" or "this product does not contain any transgenic DNA fragment or transgenic protein, but with genetically modified (organism name)".

⁸ The Philippine GMO Labelling and Regulation Act. (2016). House of Representatives. Retrieved from: http://www.congress.gov.ph/legisdocs/basic_17/HB03686.pdf

⁹ Labelling Requirements for Prepackaged Food Containing GMOs. (2019). Taiwan FDA. Retrieved from: <https://www.fda.gov.tw/EN/lawContent.aspx?cid=16&id=3136>

THAILAND

It is compulsory to label GM soybeans, corn and their products in Thailand.¹⁰

These products which contain $\geq 5\%$ recombinant DNA or protein resulting from gene technology of each top three main ingredients in terms of the ration weight they occupy should be labelled as follows: a statement of “Genetically Modified” should be provided in conjunction with, or in close proximity to the name of the food or ingredient.

VIETNAM

It is compulsory to label GM food in Vietnam.¹¹

Prepacked food containing at least one GM ingredient which is $\geq 5\%$ of the total ingredients must be labelled “genetically modified”.

¹⁰ Notification No. 251 B.E. 2545 Re: Labelling of Food Obtained Through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification/Engineering. (2002). Thailand Food and Drug Administration. Retrieved from: http://food.fda.moph.go.th/law/data/announ_moph/V.English/No.251-45%20Labelling%20Genetic%20Modification,engineering.pdf

¹¹ Vietnam Issues Mandatory GMO Labelling Circular. (2015) USDA GAIN Report. Retrieved from: https://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Vietnam%20issues%20mandatory%20GMO%20labeling%20Circular_Hanoi_Vietnam_12-30-2015.pdf