

Genetically **KRAFT**ed Foods

TEN GOOD REASONS why consumers are asking the largest food manufacturer in the U.S. to remove genetically engineered ingredients from its products

Kraft makes genetically engineered foods. In fact, some of its products, including Lunchables, Taco Bell taco shells and Stove Top Stuffing, recently tested positive for genetically engineered ingredients.¹ Now the Genetically Engineered Food Alert Coalition and consumers across the country are asking the company to take genetically altered ingredients out of our food. Here are ten good reasons why:



One Kraft foods are everywhere

Kraft Foods Inc. (which includes both Kraft Foods North America and Kraft Foods International) makes foods found in 99% of U.S. households.² The multinational food giant sells products under 61 brands in more than 140 countries.³ Separate brands give the illusion of competition, but foods labeled Nabisco, Oscar Mayer, Post, Maxwell House, Philadelphia, Jell-O, Planters, Oreo, Ritz, Tang, Lunchables, and many other popular brands are in fact all Kraft products.⁴ In 2001, Kraft sold a staggering \$33,875,000,000 worth of food worldwide.⁵ Our grocery carts are so full of Kraft's products that supermarket consultants say it would be nearly impossible to run a U.S. grocery store without them.⁶



Because Kraft makes so much of our food, it has an enormous responsibility not to taint it with genetically engineered ingredients.

Two Kraft targets kids

Many of Kraft's products are geared towards children. Everything from ready-to-eat cereals (like Alpha-Bits, Oreo O's and Pebbles) to drinks (Kool-Aid, Capri Sun and Tang) to snacks (Lunchables, Jell-O and Life Savers) are processed, packaged and marketed to attract children. One of the dangers of genetically engineered foods is that they may contain new allergens. Since children are more prone to allergies than adults (food allergies occur in 2% of adults and 6–8% of children), they are the population most at risk from new allergens in genetically engineered foods.⁷ Allergic reactions can mean more than watery eyes and itchy welts; in fact, an estimated 29,000 episodes of life-threatening anaphylactic reactions to food occur each year in the U.S., killing 150 people.⁸

Kraft should not be targeting our children with their untested and potentially dangerous genetically engineered foods.



Genetically engineered foods and your health

Genetically engineered foods are made by inserting genes from a plant, animal, bacterium, fungus or virus into an organism's DNA. This allows bioengineers to create genetic combinations (for example, pigs with human genes) that are not possible through traditional techniques. Chances are you are already buying these revolutionary new foods. The food industry estimates that more than 60% of all non-organic processed foods sold in U.S. supermarkets contain genetically engineered ingredients.¹

Trouble is, there is no mandatory product labeling, so it is almost impossible to tell which foods are genetically altered. Worse, *the U.S. government does not require*

independent pre-market safety testing for genetically engineered foods! In fact, safety testing these foods is extremely complex. As Richard Lacey, microbiologist, medical doctor, and Professor of Food Safety at Leeds University (UK) said, "It is virtually impossible to even conceive of a testing procedure to assess the health effects of genetically engineered foods."²

These foods pose serious risks to human health, such as increased allergenicity and new toxins. The crops also present dangerous threats to the environment, including harm to animals and insects (such as Monarch butterflies). Growing genetically engineered crops can be

disadvantageous to farmers, who are already hurting from modern agricultural practices, and can have devastating impacts on rural communities.

For more information on genetically engineered crops and foods, see Genetically Engineered Food Alert's online presentation at www.panna.org/ge.

Notes

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Three Kraft foods were found to contain genetically engineered ingredients not approved for human consumption

Genetically Engineered Food Alert Coalition—not Kraft, EPA or the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—that resulted in the StarLink™ discovery! Kraft’s taco shells and more than 300 other products were later recalled under FDA orders.¹⁰

Kraft and several other food producers recently settled a class action lawsuit brought against them by consumers who charged that StarLink™-contaminated food triggered allergic reactions.¹¹

Kraft put unapproved genetically engineered ingredients in our food. It should stop using these hard-to-manage ingredients altogether.

In September 2000, Kraft Foods was forced to recall more than 25 million Taco Bell brand taco shells after the product was found to contain genetically altered corn not approved for human consumption. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that this corn, also known as StarLink™, has a protein with six characteristics of food allergens.⁹

Remarkably, it was testing done by the



After Kraft recalled its StarLink™-tainted taco shell products, it recommended that regulatory agencies

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Four Kraft uses genetically engineered ingredients even though it says such ingredients should face tougher regulation

that these safeguards are not in place, the food giant continues to make products containing genetically engineered ingredients.

If Kraft believes that the government should follow higher standards for genetic engineering, why is it using genetically engineered ingredients in our food?

impose “mandatory review of all plant biotechnology advances,” require “fully validated” identification procedures and “strengthen requirements for environmental stewardship.”¹² The National Academy of Sciences recently also called for tougher standards.¹³

Yet despite the fact

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Five Kraft is moving to protect consumers in Europe, but not here

Kraft also knows that a September 1999 *Time* magazine poll found that 58% of U.S. consumers would avoid genetically engineered foods if they were labeled.¹⁵ Yet, although food companies clearly can remove genetically engineered ingredients, Kraft refuses to do so for U.S. consumers.

No double standard! Kraft should honor the wishes of U.S. consumers.

Kraft is working to make products free of genetically engineered ingredients—for its European consumers, but not those in the United States.¹⁴ U.S. consumers have contacted Kraft by the thousands asking for foods made without genetic alteration. Surely



In 2001, Kraft Foods’ profits totaled a whopping \$1,882,000,000.¹⁶ Co-CEO and Director Roger

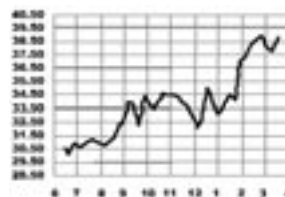
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Six Kraft and its officers earn more than enough money to make our food safe

Deromedi (who is also president and CEO of Kraft Foods International) earned \$7,231,000 in 2001 from Kraft. Co-CEO and Director Betsy Holden (also president and CEO of Kraft Foods North America) earned

\$7,212,000.¹⁷ Despite the company’s remarkable wealth, Kraft says it will not take the steps needed to secure food inputs that are not genetically engineered. Other food manufacturers, however, have moved to eliminate genetically engineered ingredients. For example, Gerber and Heinz declared they would not use them in their baby foods¹⁸ and Frito-Lay told its

corn and potato farmers to stop growing genetically engineered crops for use in its snack products.¹⁹ Wild Oats, Whole Foods Market and Trader Joe’s are removing genetically engineered ingredients from their house-brand food products.



Kraft’s mega-profits come from our food dollars. They can give a little back to make our food safe.



Although Kraft tries to project a wholesome image, the food giant is controlled by and serves Philip Morris, the world's largest manufacturer of

Seven Kraft is really tobacco king Philip Morris

public image, saying it needed a portfolio of brands representing strong customer relationships.²¹ Kraft also plays a role in channeling political campaign contributions to candidates reluctant to accept tobacco money publicly.²²

tobacco, which kills about four million people annually worldwide.²⁰ Philip Morris acquired Kraft in part to shore up its abysmal



Philip Morris spun off Kraft in June 2001, but still owns 84% of the company and almost 100% of the voting rights.²³ Kraft's co-CEOs report to the chairman of Philip Morris, prompting one Goldman, Sachs & Co. analyst to say, "It will be the chairman and the board, which is controlled by Philip Morris, who will be the ultimate decision-makers for Kraft."²⁴

Can we trust a company with such direct ties to Philip Morris to put our health above profit? Kraft could begin to earn our faith by removing genetically engineered ingredients from its foods.

Kraft states that "product safety and quality are our top priority."²⁵ But not only do many of Kraft's

8 Kraft claims to be concerned about the safety of its products

products contain genetically engineered ingredients, they are also highly processed "convenience" foods that represent the opposite of a healthy diet. Take, for example, Kraft's Lunchables, which are marketed as a complete meal that's popular with children. According to a study at the Medical College of Wisconsin, some Lunchables contain nearly three-fourths of the recommended daily salt

allowance. Researchers found that rats fed a diet of ham-and-cheese Lunchables had a 20% increase in blood pressure in three weeks.²⁶ The "Fit for Life" website listed Lunchables as one of ten foods that "you should never eat." They state that the "lean" Turkey Breast & Cheddar cheese Lunchables pack has as much saturated fat as two pork chops.²⁷ Saturated fats may make things taste



Jason Malinsky

good, but they can also lead to heart disease, diabetes, obesity, cancer and many other illnesses.²⁸

If Kraft really wants to put health and safety before profit, it should stop using genetically engineered ingredients.

Kraft is not only using genetically engineered ingredients, but it is trying to radically transform the idea of food itself. For example, Kraft's Nanotechnology Lab is designing "smart drinks" that contain capsules

9 Kraft wants to change food as we know it

that have the color, fragrance and taste of tens of thousands of different drinks—all in one product. As Kraft sees it, consumers would buy a generic liquid containing the multiple-choice capsules (ranging from fruit juices to colas to wines and spirits). By exposing the beverage to different ultrasound or radio frequencies, the desired color and flavor would be released.²⁹

As Kraft carries the concept of processed foods into the realm of science fiction with genetic engineering and nanotechnology, we end up with a "virtual" diet of unwholesome, unhealthy, unnatural and potentially dangerous foods.



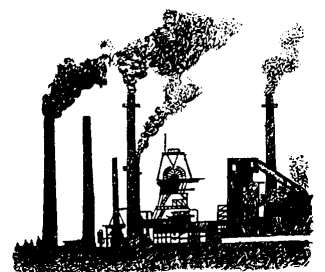
Kraft states, "We have the responsibility—and the desire—to help make a difference on the critical issues facing society."³⁰ However, Kraft's record on many of these issues is highly questionable.

10 Kraft claims to be concerned about the state of the world

▼ **Environment:** Kraft Foods has factories that rank as some of the dirtiest facilities in the U.S., based on data from the government's Toxics Release Inventory and National Emissions Trends.³¹

▼ **Job security:** As a result of Kraft's merger with Nabisco, at least 16 plants will be closed around the world, and 7,500 jobs will be cut.³²

▼ **Family farms:** A 1996 study issued by the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture found that Kraft was manipulating national dairy markets in order to price gouge



both farmers and consumers—reaping millions in windfall profits as a result.³³

The good deeds of the company are carefully planned public relations efforts. For example, Philip Morris used its donation of 43 tons of Kraft food products to Kosovo as the focal point of a 60-second, feel-good television ad.³⁴

Kraft and Philip Morris have a long way to go before they can make a convincing case that they are concerned about the state of the world. Removing genetically engineered ingredients from Kraft products would be an important first step.

What you can do!

In February 2001, the Genetically Engineered Food Alert Coalition, along with thousands of concerned citizens and food safety activists in more than 170 cities, launched a campaign calling on Kraft to remove genetically engineered ingredients from its foods.

Kraft cares about your food dollar! Here's what you can do:

- 1 Call Kraft Foods** at 1-800-543-5335 and ask that the company remove genetically engineered ingredients from its foods! Or send an immediate e-comment to Kraft by visiting www.gefoodalert.org.
- 2 Learn more** about the campaign and the risks of genetically engineered foods at www.gefoodalert.org.
- 3 Help** gather signatures, educate your neighbors and support the campaign in your area. Download materials at www.gefoodalert.org or call us at (202) 783-7400 ext. 190 or larcher@foe.org.

Genetically Engineered Food Alert

Genetically Engineered Food Alert is a coalition of hundreds of scientists, environmentalists, consumer groups, farmers, doctors, celebrities and others who believe that genetically engineered foods should not be on our supermarket shelves unless:

- Independent safety testing proves they have no harmful effects on human health or the environment;
- They are labeled to ensure the consumer's right to know; and
- The biotechnology corporations that manufacture them are held responsible for any harm.

Founding members of the coalition include the Center for Food Safety, Friends of the Earth, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, National Environmental Trust, Organic Consumers Association, Pesticide Action Network North America and the State Public Interest Research Groups.

Pesticide Action Network

Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA) advocates adoption of ecologically sound practices in place of hazardous pesticides and genetically engineered crops. PANNA has over 140 affiliated groups in Canada, Mexico and the U.S., providing technical support and participating in joint projects with partner NGOs in Africa, Asia and the Americas. For more information, visit www.panna.org.

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Notes

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