



Pandora's Picnic Basket: The Potential and Hazards of Genetically Modified Foods

Alan McHughen

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The first book to look at all the issues involved in GM (genetically modified food) technology in a clear and dispassionate way. Alan McHughen surveys the technology that makes GM food possible, assesses the risk of health and environmental dangers and the regulatory and labelling processes in force to protect the consumer. Question and answer boxes and case histories, and the author's easy writing style make this an essential purchase for all those interested in the

debate. - ;Are you concerned about fish genes in tomatoes? Worried that brazil nut genes in soybeans can result in potentially lethal allergic reactions? That rapeseed plants bred to be resistant to herbicides could become uncontrollable superweeds? You are not alone. The issue of genetically modified foods has fast become one of the most debated of recent years, with scientists and companies seeking to develop the technology on one side, and consumer groups and environmentalists on the other.

However, in spite of the great heat generated by the debate, there is very little real information on the subject, either about the technologies in use or about the regulatory processes established to approve the processes and the products. This book sets out to explain, in clear and direct language, the technologies underlying so-called genetically modified food, and compares them with other "natural" methods of plant breeding and production. The author then looks at the safeguards in place from regulators around the world and asks whether these are sufficient. The question of labelling, held by some to be an obvious way out for concerned consumers, is examined, and the honesty and usefulness of some of these labels addressed. The book then looks at issues of real concern, particularly environmental issues, and ways in which a consumer can seek to avoid GMOs if they so choose. In each chapter, key topics are addressed through question and answer boxes. Real case histories illustrate the development and regulation of GMOs, and by the end of the book the reader will be able to make an informed choice about whether to support or challenge this technology, the products of which are increasingly pervasive. -

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Sandra Fritz:

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