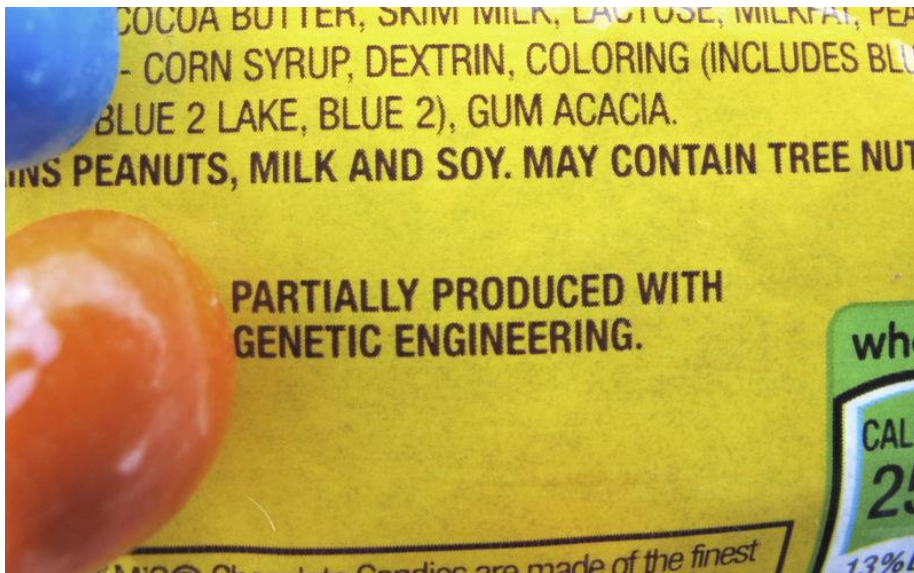


# Report: Modified food safe but not ending hunger



The Associated Press

A new disclosure statement is displayed on a package of Peanut M&M's candy.

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The Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) — Genetically manipulated food remains generally safe for humans and the environment, a high-powered science advisory board declared in a report Tuesday.

The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine concluded that tinkering with the genetics of what we eat does not produce the “Frankenfood” monster some opponents claim — but it is not feeding the world with substantially increased yields, as proponents promised.

With the line between engineered and natural foods blurring thanks to newer techniques such as gene editing, the 408-page report said, regulators need to make their safety focus more on the end-product of the food that’s made rather than the nuts and bolts of how it’s made.

The report waltzed a bit around the hot political issue of whether genetically modified food should be labeled. The study's authors said labels are not needed for food safety reasons but potentially could be justified because of transparency, social and cultural factors, somewhat similar to made-in-America stickers. That stance was praised by some environmental and consumer groups, but criticized by some scientists as unnecessary because the food poses no unique risks.

There's no evidence of environmental problems caused by genetically modified crops, but pesticide resistance is a problem, the report said. Farms that use genetically modified crops in general are helped, but it may be a different story for smaller farmers and in poorer areas of the world, it said.

Most of the modified plants are soybean, cotton, corn and canola; in most cases, genetic tinkering has made them resistant to certain herbicides and insects. When farms switched from conventional crops to the engineered varieties, there was no substantial change in the yield compared to non-engineered food. Production in general is increasing in agriculture, but U.S. Agriculture Department data does not show that genetically engineered crops are increasing at a higher rate, despite experimental results that suggest they should, the report said.

"Farmers in general are gaining," with less pesticide use and a bit higher yield, academy committee chairman Fred Gould said at a Tuesday news conference.

The nuanced report first said it is important not to make sweeping statements on genetically engineered foods, which it called GE. Still, "the committee concluded that no differences have been found that implicate a higher risk to human health safety from these GE foods than from their non-GE counterparts."

The National Academy, established by President Abraham Lincoln to provide scientific advice, has issued reports before saying it could find no safety problem with eating genetically modified food. But the academy committee chairman Fred Gould of North Carolina State University said this report is different because his study team started by listening to critics of such foods and examined anew more than 1,000 studies. [Speech](#)

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