NON-GMO SHOPPING GUIDE

Your easy guide to finding NON-GMO products at the Wedge
**GMOs**

**what are they?**
A GMO is a genetically modified organism, meaning its genome has been artificially altered in order to favor the expression of certain traits or the output of desired biological products. These modifications can be accomplished via a number of biotechnical methods, including cell fusion, mutagenesis and recombinant DNA technologies. The primary commercial application of GMOs are in the area of agriculture, where they are sometimes referred to as genetically engineered (GE) crops. Any food products made from a GE crop can be considered a genetically engineered food.

**what is not a GMO?**
The above-mentioned technologies are not considered compatible with organic food production standards. This is why all organic products should never contain GMOs. However, there are some methods that influence the growth and development of organisms in ways that might not be possible under natural conditions that are considered compatible with organic agriculture. These include the use of traditional breeding, in vitro fertilization, hybridization, conjugation, fermentation and tissue culture.

The Wedge Community Co-op is committed to the belief that consumers have the right to know if their food has been genetically engineered. We act on this belief by supporting local and national organizations that educate consumers and advocate for mandatory labeling laws, including the Non-GMO Project and Right to Know Minnesota. We are also a member of the National Cooperative Grocer’s Association (NCGA), a trade organization comprised of cooperative groceries across the country, working to fight for the labeling of GMOs at the national and state levels. The Wedge Board of Directors has established a set of principles about GMOs available at http://www.wedge.coop/shopping-resources/ or the customer service desk that outlines the co-op’s guidelines on GMOs.

While we are optimistic that GMO labeling will become a reality in the near future, until that time, we’d like to offer this shopping guide as a resource for consumers interested in avoiding genetically engineered foods. We hope that this information and transparency empowers you to make shopping choices based on your values and convictions, while still allowing the co-op to provide food options across different price points and in different categories for the entirety of its diverse ownership.
what is a GMO?

a Genetically Modified Organism

THE 5 MOST PREVALENT GMO CROPS

**corn**
Not the kind of corn you eat off the cob, but commodity corn for processed food and animal feed. Most commonly found in corn flour, corn meal, corn oil, corn starch, gluten, and corn syrup, as well as sweeteners such as fructose, dextrose, and glucose.

**soy**
This includes soy flour, lecithin, protein, isolate, and isoflavone, as well as vegetable oil and vegetable protein.

**canola**
This includes canola oil (also called rapeseed oil).

**sugar beets**
If you see sugar as an ingredient, and it’s not specified as 100-percent cane sugar, it’s very likely that it came from GE.

**cotton**
This includes cottonseed oil.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING GMOS

**Buy Organic**
“USDA Organic” labeled products are not allowed to be produced from or contain any GE crops. Buying organic is the easiest way to ensure that no GMOs will be present in your food.

**Look for this Seal**
Products bearing this seal have gone through a third-party verification process that includes testing of all ingredients being grown commercially in GMO form.
The Non-GMO Project Verified seal reflects an assurance that the product in question is in compliance with the Project’s standard, though it stops short of making the absolute claim that the product is 100-percent GMO-free.

UNLESS organic, THESE COULD BE GMO:

- cereals
- breakfast bars
- SOUPS
- snack foods
- SAUCES
- corn syrup
- soy milk
- condiments
- oils
- dressings
- spreads
- baked goods
- sugar
- candy
- energy bars
- soda
Non-GMO Shopping at the Wedge

Fruits & Vegetables
Our produce section is a very safe bet for finding GMO-free foods; we tout a 7:1 organic-to-conventional Produce department and were one of the first certified-organic departments in the state. Each year, we keep that certification intact following an on-site Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA) inspection. More generally speaking, most fresh produce carries a low risk for GMOs as very few fresh fruits and vegetables in the U.S. are genetically engineered. In fact, the only commercialized GE fruit is papaya from Hawaii—about half of papayas that come from this island state are GMOs. There are some GMO varieties of crookneck squash, straightneck squash and zucchinis, but these represent a minority of those crops grown in the U.S. Buying organic fruits and vegetables is the surest way to know what you’re getting is GMO-free.

Eggs
In this department, look for egg producers that are organic certified or use a non-GMO feed on their farms. Egg-producing hens that are not raised to organic standards typically eat genetically modified grains such as corn and soy. We carry eggs from a number of local organic producers, as well as from farmers who pasture-raise their hens and buy GMO-free feed for the winter months.

Dairy Products
Buying certified-organic dairy products are the best ways to avoid GMOs in this department, which includes butter, cheese and ice cream. Unless they’re certified organic, dairy farms may feed their cows genetically modified grains and alfalfa. Some may also inject the genetically engineered growth hormone rBGH (also called rBST) into their cows to boost milk production.

We carry products from a variety of local, organic dairy producers like Cedar Summit, Crystal Ball, Castle Rock, and Rochdale farms, all of which make for easy (and delicious) ways to avoid GMOs.

Alternative Dairy Products
In this section, be sure to check the ingredients list for sweeteners that could come from GE sources. And, as ingredients change often, always check the packages, even of products you frequently purchase. Many alternative dairy products are made from soybeans and likely contain genetically engineered materials if they’re not organic. At the Wedge, we carry options like Green Valley Organics lactose-free yogurts and kefirs, Good Karma flax milk, and Organic Valley soy milks and creamers.
**Bulk**
The Wedge’s bulk section carries nearly 200 non-GMO items that you can package and take home with you in whatever amount makes sense for your needs. These include grains, beans, pastas, nuts, dried fruits, coffees and flours. Look for organic labels, and if you’re not sure about an item, ask someone at Customer Service. They’ll be happy to find out.

**Packaged Grocery**
These are the aisles where you’ll run into the most risk of unwittingly consuming GMOs. Keep a lookout for ingredients like corn syrup; soy lecithin; milk solids or powders; and oils such as soybean, canola, cottonseed, or vegetable, as they are commonly found in a variety of processed foods. Items like cereals and breakfast bars are very likely to include genetically engineered ingredients because they are often made with corn, soy and sugar. Many soups and sauces as well as snack foods, energy bars, sodas, baked goods, candy and condiments, oils, dressings, and spreads have a greater likelihood of containing GMOs. Look for products that contain whole grains, use olive or coconut oils, and are unsweetened or use maple syrup, honey molasses or pure cane sugar instead. In these aisles, to avoid a ton of squinting at ingredient lists and the ensuing headaches, Organic and Non-GMO Project Verified labels are your best friends.

**Baby Foods & Infant Formula**
Buying organic or Non-GMO Project Verified infant formulas allows you to avoid GMOs. Most baby foods are just what the label says with few additives or preservatives, but still check the labels on conventional jarred foods and cereals for things like soy lecithin and corn syrup, which likely contain GMOs.

**Health & Body Care**
To avoid GMOs in your health and body care products, shop organic and look for producers that have achieved Non-GMO Project verification. Many commonly found ingredients in personal care products come from agricultural sources, and these may contain genetically engineered materials. Ingredients such as vitamin E, lecithin, citric acid, glycerin, and lauric acid could all be potentially derived from crops like soy, canola, and corn.
Bakehouse, Deli & Juice Bar
The Wedge is home to the first certified-organic juice bar in the country, and our all-organic tea and coffee menus offer you a lot of delicious ways to avoid GMOs in your beverages. These provide the best options for steering clear of GMOs in your prepared foods. And you can always inspect the ingredient list for each Deli item; all ingredients are listed for full transparency.

Frozen Foods
The Wedge’s Frozen Food section offers many organic and non-GMO Project Verified foods. Most frozen fruits and vegetables don’t contain other additives, making them good GMO-free shopping choices. However, many conventional frozen foods that are processed run the risk of GMOs, so unless you see an Organic or non-GMO Project label, be sure to check the labels for at-risk ingredients.

Alternative Meat Products
In this section, pay close attention to the ingredients list and try to buy organic when possible. Many alternative meat products are processed with and include ingredients that are genetically engineered, especially soy. We carry many organic options including Wildwood veggie burgers, Lightlife’s selection of organic tempehs and Rosewood Tofu made from organic Midwest soybeans.

Meat & Seafood
The Wedge boasts the first certified-organic Meat department in the country. Seventy percent of our meat comes from local producers with whom we’ve cultivated relationships built on trust and high standards of ethical and environmental practice. When you’re at the butcher counter, look for meats that are 100-percent grass fed or organic to avoid GMOs. Nationwide, it’s safe to say that most conventionally raised animals are fed GE feed crops. That does not mean that all non-organic farms fit easily under this umbrella—many farmers we represent are making strides to address the GMO feed supply. Unfortunately, the sparse availability of non-GMO feed is a problematic reality in the U.S.

Processed and precooked meats may contain grain by-products that could be derived from GE crops, so look for prepackaged products that are certified organic.

*While wild-caught seafood is a good choice for avoiding GMOs, it’s not free of other issues. Large predatory fish are likely to contain high levels of mercury. And many wild fisheries outside the U.S. employ questionable environmental-management practices. If these issues also concern you, the Monterey Bay Seafood Watch Recommendations are a good place to start when choosing your seafood: www.seafoodwatch.org.
Resource Guide

To get involved in the push for GMO labeling in Minnesota, check out these advocacy groups:

- Right to Know Minnesota
  http://righttoknowmn.org/
- Just Label It
  http://justlabelit.org/
- GMO Action Alliance
  http://gmoactionalliance.com/

For the latest in GMO news and views:

- Food Democracy Now
  http://www.fooddemocracynow.org/
- Center for Food Safety
  http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/issues/976/ge-food-labeling
- Grist: Series on GMOs
  http://grist.org/series/panic-free-gmos/

For Labeling Standards:

- USDA National Organic Program
  http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/NOPOrganicStandards
- Non-GMO Project