



**Domestic Fair Trade Association
Position Statement on Genetically Modified Organisms
Approved by Members July 6, 2011**

The DFTA Position Statement on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) is based on our principle of Sustainable Agriculture stating, “Fair Trade emphasizes the biodiversity of traditional agriculture, supports the rights of farmers to their own seed, and preserves cultural identity” and our principle of Appropriate Technology stating, “Fair Trade supports the use of traditional technologies, which are openly and freely shared in the public domain, and excludes plants and animals, and biological processes, which have been genetically engineered or modified.”¹

The Domestic Fair Trade Association reaffirms its opposition to the use of GMOs based on these principles and concerns based on health and environmental risk and public access.

- Health concerns—There are limited studies on the impact of GMO food crops on human health, but animal health studies point to serious concerns such as organ damage or allergic reactions. In addition, because GMO food crops were introduced relatively recently, it is too early to tell whether additional chronic health concerns may be linked to GMOs.²
- Environmental risk—Uncontrollable cross-pollination depletes seed and crop diversity, which directly threatens small farmers around the world and threatens natural eco-systems including wild animal and plant life; in addition, GMO crops bred to be resistant to herbicides have already led to resistant weeds that are causing greater problems for renters of GM seeds.
- Toxic chemicals—Many crops are genetically modified to withstand the application of herbicides, leading to increased toxic chemical use potentially affecting health of workers, communities, and the environment.
- Public access—GMO crops are patented and not freely available for public use without paying a fee; to use GM seeds, farmers must waive their rights to save seeds in favor of renting them each year.

¹ To read our full principles: www.thedfta.org.

² See for example GMO project publication GM Crops – Just the Science <http://www.nongmoproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/GM-Crops-just-the-science.pdf>.

The widespread use of GMOs potentially affects a wide range of stakeholders including consumers who eat genetically modified food, farmers who wish to farm without GMOs and fear seed contamination, workers who may be asked to apply additional chemicals, and processors, manufacturers, and retailers who wish to guarantee to their customers that their products are free of GMO contamination.

DFTA supports public policies that require and protect:

- Both long and short-term health and safety testing for people
- Both long and short-term health and safety testing for animals
- Both long and short term environmental evaluation for both agriculture and wild plant and animal life
- Strong accountability and liability regulations for patent-holders of GMO crops; the regulations should provide meaningful recourse for farmers whose non-GMO crops are contaminated by GMOs, others who are damaged by the production and use of GMOs, and for ecological damage incurred from their use
- Rights of all farmers to use and save seeds in the manner they choose
- Rights of all farmers to grow food, feed, or fiber without risk of contamination by GMOs
- Transparency regarding how and where food was grown so that consumers can choose non-GMO food if they wish; this includes labeling of foods containing GMO ingredients
- Public funding of publically available technologies and sustainable agriculture methods.

The Domestic Fair Trade Association is a coalition of organizations from across the food and agriculture system representing farmers, farmworkers, food chain workers, processors, marketers, manufacturers, retailers, and NGOs. For more information about the guiding principles and work of DFTA, visit our website at www.thedfta.org.