

While more than 40 countries around the world require labeling for genetically-modified (GM) foods, in the U.S. any GM product can be sold without letting the consumer know its transgenic origin. In September, consumer advocacy group Just Label It filed a petition to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the hope it would change its stance on the issue. The petition's 180-day period is set to close on Tuesday, Mar. 27. 

Just Label It spokesperson Sue McGovern tells www.freshfruitportal.com the campaign has set a new precedent for public involvement in a health campaign that has transcended political differences.

"We're in the final push to get a million signatures and we are very optimistic that we will reach or exceed that one million mark," she says.

"We've also had the most comments generated ever for an FDA petition."

At the time of writing the group had 990,000 signatures.

The group lists several common crops that can be genetically modified but are not labeled as such, including corn, soybeans, Hawaiian papayas, yellow crookneck squash, zucchini, alfalfa, sugar beets, cotton and canola.

The campaign is not fighting against the existence GM food, but promoting labeling transparency in the industry.

"On Tuesday we will be making the announcement of the results of our nationwide poll of support for GE labelling in the U.S.; support that has been across party lines, whether it be Republicans, Democrats or Independents," says McGovern.

"It's remarkable that in 180 days people in the U.S. have put their differences aside and have been united in pushing for their right to know what's in their food, so we're very excited and pleased about that.

She says the FDA regulations show that 180 days after filing a legal petition the administration is supposed to give a response under its guidelines, but the group is not sure the FDA will do so.

A Thomson Reuters poll in 2010 showed 93% of Americans want GM foods to be labeled.

Photo: Green Change



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