



Genetically Modified Organisms

Type of rule	Global policy
Version	1.0
Valid from	1/7/2020
Last update	1/7/2020
Next update	1/7/2022
Process owner	METRO AG Group Director, Corporate Responsibility
Contact person	Ms Anne Hildebrand, anne.hildebrand@metro.de
Change history	–

1 Introduction

The use of genetically modified (GM) substances in foods, known as green genetic engineering, is a complex and controversial topic. For some, it represents an important step into the future, while others see it as a threat to human and animal health, biodiversity and the environment. Proponents of green genetics are convinced it improves the quality of ingredients, making them more resistant to mould and pests and enhancing the capacity of plants to assimilate nutrients, which reduces the need for fertiliser. Critics argue that, owing to a lack of long-term data, not enough research has been conducted into the possible negative effects on the environment and biodiversity, such as the potential threat to local flora and fauna, or changes to the composition of plant ingredients.

Legislation on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) also differs greatly from one country to another. It covers the entire spectrum and includes bans on the sale of foods containing GMOs, complex, time-consuming approval procedures, and labelling guidelines which are either non-binding or restrictive. Legal consistency does not exist.

The same inconsistency is found at the level of consumer perception. While Spanish and Polish consumers accept GMOs in food products, Austrian and German consumers fundamentally reject them. The population in Asia is divided, with views ranging from acceptance in Pakistan to outright rejection in Japan.

2 Position

As an international wholesaler and food specialist, METRO's core business is highly dependent on the availability of agricultural resources today and in the future. On the one hand, METRO is open to any technology, including modern biotechnology, that can improve resource quality and efficiency. On the other hand, METRO is committed to approaches that contribute to protecting the environment and biodiversity and that follow the objectives laid down in the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#):

- Conserve the diversity of species and habitats and their functional capability
- Contribute to the sustainable use of its components
- Promote the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of biodiversity and the ecosystem services provided

Monitoring diverse stakeholder views, trade-offs and the legal requirements in different markets – in order to assess and manage the associated risks for METRO's business and put in place effective measures to mitigate them – are important elements of the sustainable sourcing process for own-brand products at METRO.

In these ambiguous circumstances, we are convinced that full transparency and traceability of food and its ingredients is key, to enable us to source responsibly.

Consequently, METRO food suppliers are requested to provide information concerning GM ingredients and ingredients originating from GMOs via an internal quality and safety management tool for our own-brand (private label) products. We have already taken the first steps necessary to create even greater transparency surrounding GM ingredients contained in animal feed for the production of meat and fish that is supplied to METRO and centrally sourced by our trading offices.

In order to help our customers make their own responsible buying decisions, transparent, clear and unambiguous labelling on the use of GMOs in food products is crucial. All own-brand products containing more than 0.9% GMO material or ingredients derived from GMOs (in accordance with EU legislation) must be clearly labelled.

2 Objectives

- § Genetically modified livestock (meat and fish) must not be used in our own-brand supply chain
- § 100% transparency concerning genetically modified ingredients and ingredients originating from genetically modified organisms/plants in food products
- § 100% transparent labelling of food products containing more than 0.9% genetically modified ingredients

3 Scope and target groups

- § All countries in which METRO operates, including Food Service Distribution: Classic Fine Foods, Pro à Pro and Rungis Express
- § Own-brand products: meat, fish, dairy, eggs

We will focus on own brands, but we expect brand suppliers to comply with the respective European and national legislation regarding GMOs and to act in the same spirit as this METRO policy and increase transparency within the value chain in accordance with their level of responsibility.

4 Reporting

METRO will make this policy publicly available. Progress will be reported in the annual METRO AG Corporate Responsibility Report and will be measured on the basis of the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

- Share of food products that are free from GM ingredients and ingredients derived from GMOs
- Share of livestock (meat and fish) fed with GMO-free animal feed
- Share of food products not carrying a GMO label