

GMO Labeling Bill Signed into Law

Article By:

Aaron M. Phelps

On July 29, 2016, President Obama signed into law a bill that creates a federal labeling standard for foods containing genetically modified organism ingredients (GMO's). According to AgriPulse, the law caps "an historic win for farm groups, food companies and the biotech industry. The biotech bill mandates disclosure of genetically engineered ingredients but will allow companies to do it through scannable smartphone codes as an alternative to on-package text or symbol." The legislation preempts Vermont's first-in-the-nation GMO labeling law, which went into effect July 1.

Several agriculture organizations and food manufacturing associations supported the bill. The president of the American Soybean Association, Richard Wilkins, said "[t]he passage of this bill allows for both consumers and producers to move on from this fight, and benefit from a uniformed, standardized labeling law across the country." Furthermore, Clay Hough, senior group vice president and legal counsel for the International Dairy Foods Association, said the law "will bring much-needed consistency to the marketplace."

Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kansas) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) were involved in weeks of negotiations over the law. "Mandatory, nationwide GMO labeling is now the law of the land and that should be celebrated by all those who worked so hard to ensure that all consumers have more information about their food," said Stabenow.

The USDA has two years to write the rules for the new legislation and has already been working to develop a timeline for rulemaking and to ensure an open and transparent process for effectively establishing this new program. Foods coming from livestock like beef, milk, poultry or eggs do not require a GMO label, even if the animal ate feed containing GM corn or soybeans.

© 2024 Varnum LLP

National Law Review, Volumess VI, Number 269

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/gmo-labeling-bill-signed-law>