

APPENDIX 2–C

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY ABOUT FOOD BIOTECHNOLOGY

The American Medical Association (AMA)

It is the policy of the AMA to (1) endorse or implement programs that will convince the public and government officials that genetic manipulation is not inherently hazardous and that the health and economic benefits of recombinant DNA technology greatly exceed any risk posed to society; (2) where necessary, urge Congress and federal regulatory agencies to develop appropriate guidelines which will not impede the progress of agricultural biotechnology, yet will ensure that adequate safety precautions are enforced; (3) encourage and assist the state medical societies to coordinate programs which will educate physicians in recombinant DNA technology as it applies to public health, such that the physician may respond to patient query and concern; (4) encourage physicians, through the state medical societies, to be public spokespersons for those agricultural biotechnologies that will benefit public health; and (5) actively participate in the development of national programs to educate the public about the benefits of agricultural biotechnology.¹

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

From the standpoint of the Food and Drug Administration, the important thing for consumers to know about these new foods is that they will be every bit as safe as the foods now on store shelves. All foods, whether traditionally bred or genetically engineered, must meet the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.²

We have spent considerable amount of time and resources examining the science of gene technology and how it would impact on the food supply and have concluded that, provided that companies take the proper steps to examine

Source: The Institute of Food Technologists. International Food Information Council. What the Experts Say About Food Biotechnology. February 9, 2000.

the important safety issues, these foods should be as safe as other foods on the market. . . . In addition to those steps that breeders normally take, for products of gene technology, companies are doing far more extensive testing than has ever been done on commercial varieties. They are doing chemical analyses for important nutrients, for toxicants. They are examining the new substances, such as proteins that have been introduced into these foods, in terms of possible toxicity and allergenicity and taking other steps under the guidance of our scientists in the government to ensure proper adequate testing before they go to consumers.³

National Corn Growers Association

Biotechnology allows us to provide raw materials for industrial uses. Further, it is important for us to begin supplementing our oil use with renewable resources. Biotechnology will be critical to this effort as well as providing numerous other far-reaching benefits.⁴

American Soybean Association

Agricultural biotechnology holds promise for a hungry and ecologically fragile world. The development of new crop varieties that offer increased yields, reduced inputs, and offer specialized traits that meet end-user needs is merely the starting point.⁵

Food Scientists/Technologists

Biotechnology differs from crossbreeding in that one gene is inserted into an organism to achieve the desired effect. With traditional crossbreeding, every gene of an organism is potentially mixed with another. The one desirable trait that breeders want can be passed on, but so will some undesirable ones. With biotechnology, scientists are able to focus on the desired gene and subject it to extensive testing before and after it is inserted into the new organism.⁶

References

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2. US Food and Drug Administration. Genetic engineering fast forwarding to future foods. *FDA Consumer*. April 1995 and February 1998.
3. Maryanski J. (US Food and Drug Administration biotechnology coordinator), May 26, 1999; Worldnet interview.
4. National Corn Growers Association. President Roger Pine. March 3, 1999, testimony before the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Risk Management, Research and Specialty Crops.
5. Censky SS. Speech at the American Bar Association Biotech Roundtable; St. Louis, Mo, May 26, 1999.
6. Taylor S. Letter to the editor. *Wall Street Journal*. July 21, 1999.