

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS

Imagine this...an orange that contains all the nutrients in a multivitamin, a tomato with more flavor as well as cancer fighting substances, sweeter strawberries, a potato that produces healthier french fries, allergen-free peanuts, a rice high in beta-carotene as well as bananas that deliver needed vaccines. Is this science fiction or real science?

It's real science and it is happening in laboratories today as genetically engineered foods. To many scientists this is a very exciting time to enter a new frontier called food biotechnology. But now, what about fruits and vegetables that contain a gene from a bacterium that make these crops more insect resistant? Would you want to eat these foods? What if these crops found their way into our food supply right now? This actually happened in September 2000!

Many people are afraid of this new technology and are calling these new genetically modified foods 'Frankenstein' foods. Should we be concerned? Are these foods safe to eat? How would these new crops affect the environment? Are these genetically modified foods everything they promise to be by their proponents? Or are they something to fear according to several advocacy groups?

Are you ready for the new foods of the 21st century? Are you ready to explore the risks and benefits of genetically engineered foods? Should we consider food biotechnology a friend or a foe?

Your task in this assignment is to research genetically engineered foods and determine whether YOU personally feel they are dangerous to our health and environment.

PART A—Visit the websites on the web resources page and do some research about genetically engineered foods. You may also do research on other websites, but use these sites first. Answer the following questions in a Word document. Make sure you record where you found this information (you will be using it later).

1. What are genetically engineered foods?
2. Are genetically engineered foods destroying our environment? Why or why not?
3. Are genetically engineered foods the cure for world food issues? Why or why not?
4. What should consumers know about genetically engineered foods? Does the government currently require that all genetically foods be labeled? Should they?
5. What are the overall benefits of genetically engineered foods? What are the overall risks of genetically engineered foods? Do the benefits outweigh the risks?

PART B—Using all of the answers you have found to these questions, determine how YOU personally feel about genetically engineered foods. Write a one page (double spaced 12 pt. Times New Roman) response stating your opinion. Make sure you include the information you found in your research.

PART C—Create a bibliography citing the sources that you used to answer the questions in Part A and write the response in Part B.