

Genetically Modified Foods - A Guide For Caterers

This leaflet provides information about labelling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), as required by the Genetically Modified Food Regulations 2004 and the Genetically Modified Organisms (Traceability and Labelling) Regulations 2004

Who does this leaflet affect?

These new rules apply to meals sold at restaurants and other catering establishments, and to food that is sold loose or is packed on the premises where it is sold.

What is required?

Food retailers and caterers have to be able to tell their customers which foods and ingredients, if any, contain genetically modified organisms.

This does not include foods which are sold to consumers in the same container as they were packed in by the manufacturer.

How are the customers to be told which foods contain genetically modified organisms?

Display a notice, menu, ticket or label which can be easily read by customers (at the place where they choose the food) with either of the following statements that is appropriate to the particular food in question:

- "genetically modified"; or
- "produced from genetically modified (name of organism)" for example, "bread produced from genetically modified maize."

How do I find out which foods contain genetically modified organisms?

This information will be passed on to you in writing by your supplier. It is now a legal requirement for food products consisting of or containing GMOs (e.g. soya) to be accompanied by written documentation. Each person in the supply chain up to sale to the ultimate consumer must retain copies of the written documentation for a minimum of five years.

Are any foods exempt from the requirements?

Foods which are exempt from the requirements are as follows:

Food which contains genetically modified material that is:

- a) accidentally introduced or technically unavoidable; **and**
- b) does not exceed the threshold of **0.9%** (applies to each individual ingredient). For example, if a dish contains a sauce with soy flour in it, it is the soy flour which must contain less than 0.9% GM material, not the sauce or the dish. The threshold of **0.9%** may potentially contain up to 0.5% unauthorised GM material, provided that the supplier is able to demonstrate that he has taken appropriate steps to avoid the presence of GM material.

Constituents of an ingredient which have been temporarily separated during the manufacturing process and later reintroduced - but not in excess of their original proportions.

- Additives - whose presence in a given foodstuff is solely due to the fact that they were contained in one or more ingredients of that foodstuff, provided that they serve no technical function in the finished product.
- Additives which are used as processing aids.
- Substances used in the quantities strictly necessary as solvents or media for additives or flavouring.
- From 25th November 2005, substances which are not additives but are used in the same way and with the same purpose as processing aids and are still present in the finished product, even if in an altered form.
- Products such as meat, milk and eggs from animals fed on GM animal feed.
- Products produced with GM technology e.g. cheese produced from GM enzymes.

Genetically modified (GM) free

Products consistently 100% free from GM material can be labelled as such but its use is discouraged.

Remember:

- It is possible to detect minute traces of genetically modified organisms in food.
- Additives, flavourings and extraction solvents you use may have been produced from genetically modified organisms.

What are the consequences of non-compliance?

Failure to comply with these labelling requirements is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty on conviction in the magistrates' court is a fine of £20,000.

If you require any further advice or information please do not hesitate to contact us.