

Action Item

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To be completed by NASDA Staff:

Date Submitted: January 14, 2015

Committee: Marketing and International Trade

Adopted by NASDA

Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

Not Adopted by NASDA

Additional Notes:

1 **Subject of Action Item:** National Labeling of Foods Derived from Genetic Engineering

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3 **Submitted By:** Commissioner Michael G. Strain, Louisiana

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5 **Text of Action Item:**

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7 We strongly encourage agriculture leaders to work with Congress to enact bipartisan legislation to reaffirm the U.S.
8 Food & Drug Administration as the authority in uniform food labeling, as it relates to genetic engineering, based on
9 health, safety and nutrition.

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11 **Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the
12 Action Item):

13 There is currently a national debate on whether or not foods containing genetically-modified (GM) agricultural
14 products should be labeled. Proponents of labeling emphasize consumers' right to know what's in their food, while
15 many of us in the agriculture community point out the expense and logistical difficulties of a non-uniform labeling
16 system, and the fact that no significant differences have been found between GM and conventional foods.

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18 It is important to emphasize the potential benefits that genetically modified products have provided. Recent
19 independent research indicates that on average, GM technology adoption has reduced chemical pesticide use by 37%,
20 increased crop yields by 22%, and increased farmer profits by 68%. Yield gains and pesticide reductions are larger for
21 insect-resistant crops than for herbicide-tolerant crops. Most importantly, yield and profit gains are higher in
22 developing countries than in already developed countries. These increases in yields and decreases in chemical
23 pesticide usage per acre are critical to the feeding and survivability of the current and future populations of this
24 world.

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26 Unfortunately, there is an effort to impose state and local policies that would require mandatory labeling. This state
27 patchwork of labeling laws will also lead to a drastic increase in grocery bills. The intricate, highly evolved supply
28 chains of our nation's food manufacturers will be crippled by these laws. From farm to table, every link of the supply
29 chain will have to be altered. As more states pass these laws with their own peculiarities, the more complex the
30 system will become and the higher prices will go. Farmers will have to segregate crops, food companies will have to
31 build new plants and buy additional warehouse space, plants will have to hire new quality control inspectors and
32 states will have to hire new enforcement officers. In the end, consumers will have to pay for it all. A Cornell University
33 study released earlier this year found that the tab may be as much as \$500 more per year for the average American
34 family.

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36 We strongly encourage agriculture leaders to work with Congress to introduce bipartisan legislation that would
37 prevent this unnecessary and expensive action and reaffirm the U.S. Food & Drug Administration as the authority in
38 uniform food labeling. This legislation should benefit consumers, scientists and farmers. Technological innovations
39 that are being used to feed the world and protect the environment will be safe and aligned with the world's leading
40 health and regulatory bodies from the World Health Organization to the American Medical Association.

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42 NASDA must support an effort that would promote the production of safe, affordable and high quality agricultural
43 commodities through a national uniform labeling policy.