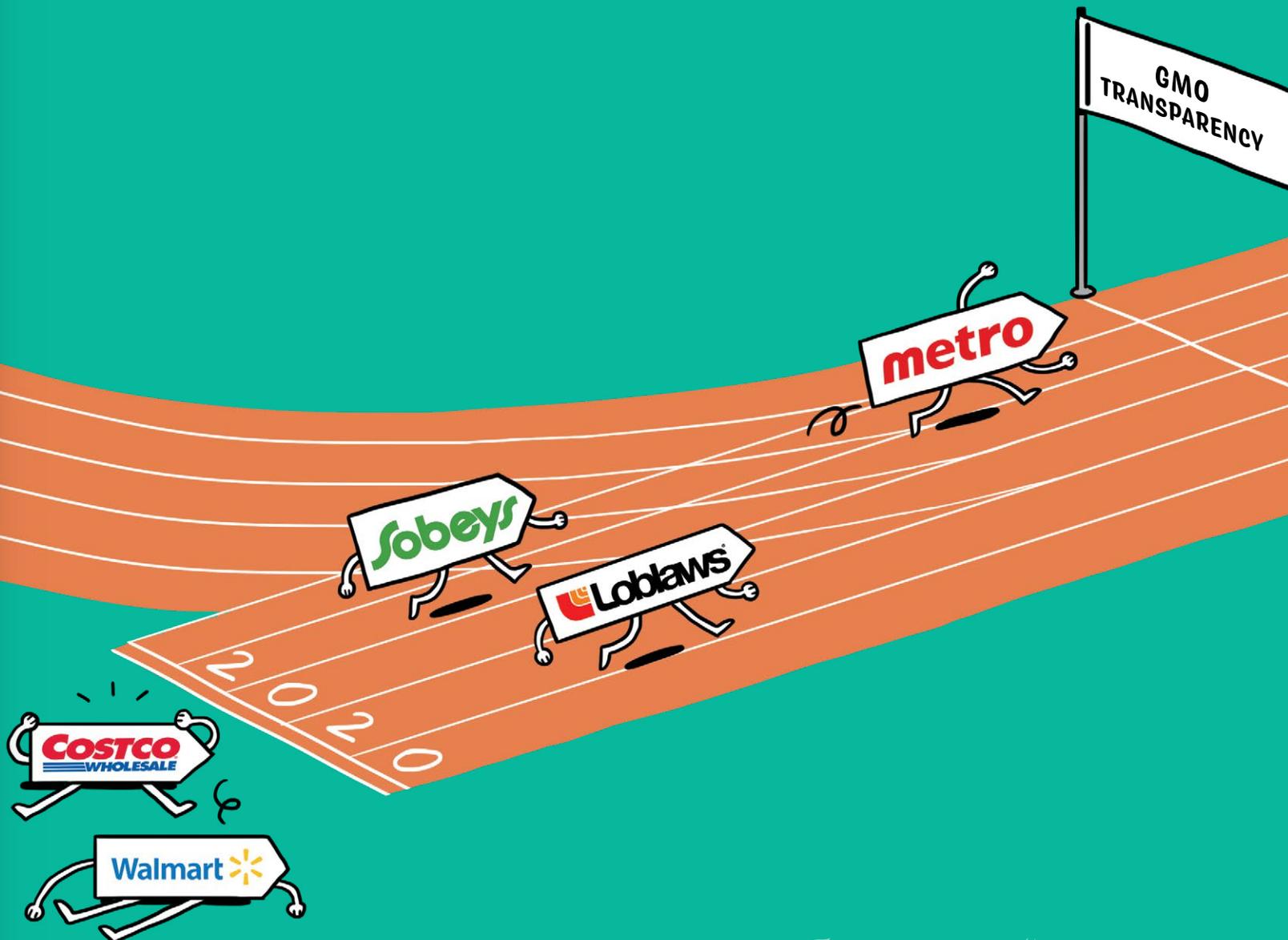


GMOs in your grocery store

# RANKING COMPANY TRANSPARENCY



This report is published by the  
**Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)**  
and **Vigilance OGM**.



**The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN)** brings together 16 groups to research, monitor and raise awareness about issues relating to genetic engineering in food and farming. CBAN members include farmer associations, environmental and social justice organizations, and regional coalitions of grassroots groups. CBAN is a project on the shared platform of the MakeWay Charitable Society.

[www.cban.ca](http://www.cban.ca)

 **CBAN**

 **biotechaction**



**Vigilance OGM** is a Quebec non-profit organization made up of groups and individuals from diverse backgrounds – farmers, environmentalists, consumers, citizens – all concerned about what we put on our plates every day and by the impact of modes agricultural production on the environment and human health.

[www.vigilanceogm.org](http://www.vigilanceogm.org)

 **Vigilance OGM**

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December 2020

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# Introduction

Opinions about genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are deeply divided. However, a large majority of Canadians,<sup>1</sup> as well as many businesses and non-governmental organizations, agree that there is a lack of transparency surrounding the use of GMOs in our food system. **The goal of this report and grocery chain transparency ranking is to provide Canadians with more information about GMOs in our food system, and what is happening inside our grocery stores in particular.**

Canada's regulatory system for GMOs has been widely criticized as insufficiently transparent,<sup>2</sup> there is no mandatory labelling of genetically modified (GM or genetically engineered) foods in Canada, and most grocery stores do not provide customers with information about which products are GM. This lack of information has created widespread confusion among consumers about which foods are genetically modified. It also hampers public discussion about the use of this technology and its possible impacts on agriculture as well as our environment, health, economy, and society.

For over ten years, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) and Vigilance OGM (GMO Watch, Quebec) have been researching and monitoring GMOs to shed light on this complex issue. **This report is a new tool to inform Canadians about GMOs in the marketplace and, in particular, the status of whole GM foods (fruits, vegetables, and fish) in Canada's largest grocery chains.** It includes a ranking of grocery chain transparency on the question of GM fruits, vegetables, and fish in stores. This report follows several years of direct communications with companies, successive years of testing for GM sweet corn in stores and farmers markets,<sup>3</sup> monitoring government GMO approvals, and researching market developments.

## Why this report?

GM foods have been sold in Canada for 25 years, and yet there is still no mandatory labelling. **Since 1994, polls have consistently shown that over 80% of Canadians want mandatory GM food labelling.**<sup>4</sup> The latest poll, from September 2020, shows that 85% of Quebecers want the Quebec government to make labelling mandatory.<sup>5</sup>

Information on GM food is important in Canada because we are a major consumer and producer of GMOS. **Canada is the world's fourth-largest producer of GM crops,**<sup>6</sup> and ingredients from such crops are common in North American processed foods. **Canadians are the first people in the world to eat a genetically modified animal, the GM Atlantic salmon.** In addition, new genetic editing techniques (gene editing or genome editing) could accelerate the introduction of new GM foods in the future.<sup>7</sup>

The vast majority of processed foods sold in grocery stores contain genetically modified food ingredients, derived from GM soy, canola and/or corn,<sup>\*</sup> and most meat and dairy products are from animals raised with GM feed. (See GMOS 101, pages 6) Very few other GM foods are being currently produced, but **a few new GM whole foods are beginning to appear in North America:** GM apple slices were sold in Canada for the first time in 2019/2020,<sup>8</sup> and new GM potatoes have been for sale in the US for a few years.

## How did we construct this report?

This summer, CBAN and Vigilance OGM sent questionnaires to the five major retail chains in Canada: **Loblaws, Sobeys, Metro, Costco and Walmart.**<sup>\*\*</sup>

**Our questions focused on GM whole foods that could be on the market, or could come to the market soon:** salmon, apples, potatoes, and sweet corn. We also asked three other general questions about mandatory labelling and the purchasing of organic and local products (See the questionnaire in Appendix 1).

We analyzed the degree of transparency in the answers provided by companies, including for clarity and level of detail. Some companies answered all of our questions (Metro, Loblaws,

**“It’s a lot of careful work but we’re committed to avoiding GMOS in the food we sell. The simplest way to avoid GMOS is to choose organic and Non-GMO Project Verified and that’s why we prioritize organic and Non-GMO Project Verified in all of our food purchasing. If a product is not organic or Non-GMO Project verified then we review each ingredient that could be GM. In fact, our entire produce section is organic and therefore also non-GM.”**

– Maureen Kirkpatrick, Quality and Standards Program Manager, The Big Carrot Community Market, Toronto, 2020<sup>9</sup>

Sobeys), some answered more clearly than others (Metro provided the most detail), and some did not respond at all (Costco and Walmart).

Given the large number of small food stores, farmers markets, and independent grocery chains across Canada, we were not able to consult with all possible food sellers. However, the information in this report should help Canadians communicate directly with their local stores. A number of stores have already taken transparent positions on GMOS, often by eliminating GM foods as much as possible and relying on organic and other non-GM certifications. We encourage customers to take our questionnaire to their store, and report back to CBAN (See Take Action, page 23).

**Providing more information to Canadians about how our food is produced will enable greater public participation in deciding the future of food and farming.** Citizen action and informed consumer choice are necessary to strengthen our democracy and build an ecological, just food system.

\* It is widely stated that up to 70% of processed foods could contain GM ingredients; however, this is an estimation with no associated data (such data is not possible without mandatory labelling).

\*\* The questionnaire was also sent to two other large food retailers in Canada: Federated Co-operatives Limited and Jim Pattison (See Grocery Industry Snapshot, page 12-13). These companies did not answer the questionnaire and were not included in this report.

# GMOs 101

Since the introduction of genetically modified corn, canola, and soy in Canada over twenty years ago, there has been very little change in which genetically modified organisms (GMOs) we are eating. Almost all of the GMOs used in food and farming are corn, canola, soy, and cotton, and the two GM traits of herbicide tolerance and insect resistance dominate the GMOs grown around the world. However, new GM whole foods – GM fruits, GM vegetables, and the world’s first GM animal – are now coming to market. Some are already being sold and eaten in Canada.

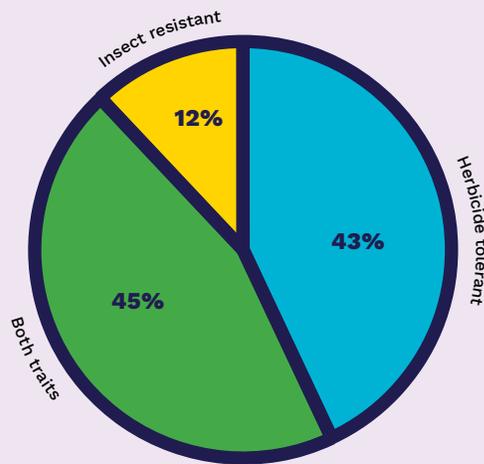


## What are GMOs?

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are living organisms that have been genetically modified (genetically engineered) in the laboratory to have new characteristics. Genetic engineering makes changes directly to the genetic material of an organism, without mating, by introducing genetic material or using techniques that induce change to an organism’s genome. For example, genetic engineering enables the direct transfer of genes between organisms in different species or kingdoms that would never breed in nature, and the introduction of new genetic sequences that do not exist in nature.

## What are GMOs for?

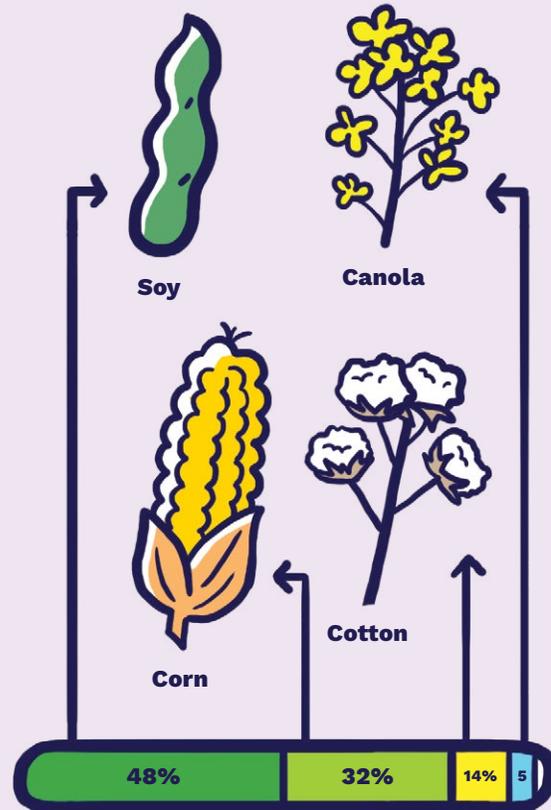
88% of the GM crop plants grown around the world are herbicide-tolerant, meaning they are genetically modified to survive specific herbicides.<sup>10</sup> Almost half are “stacked” with both herbicide tolerant and insect resistant GM traits together. These GMOs include plants that are resistant to glyphosate, the most widely used herbicide in the world.



0.05% of GMOs on the market have other GM traits such as virus resistance or non-browning.

## Which plants and animals are GM?

Four crops – corn, canola, soy, and cotton – account for 99% of the GM crops grown around the world.<sup>11</sup>



## GM Foods in Canada

Most of the genetically modified foods on the market are GM corn, canola and soy, in processed food ingredients and used as animal feed.

GM Foods	Where	Why
<b>Corn</b>	In processed food and animal feed, and a small amount of sweet corn	Herbicide tolerance and insect resistance
<b>Canola</b>	As oil in processed foods and for animal feed	Herbicide tolerance
<b>Soy</b>	In processed foods	Herbicide tolerance
<b>Sugar Beet</b>	Processed into sugar	Herbicide tolerance
<b>Alfalfa</b>	For animal feed only	Herbicide tolerance and low-lignin
<b>Salmon (Atlantic)</b>	Farmed salmon	Faster growth
<b>Apple</b>	Sliced apples in food service	Non-browning
<b>Papaya</b>	Imported from the US or China	Virus-resistant
<b>Squash</b>	Imported from the US only	Virus-resistant

## Whole Foods

This report focuses on the policies of large grocery chains regarding genetically modified whole foods (fruits, vegetables and fish). Until now, most of the GM foods on shelves have been corn, canola and soy ingredients in processed foods.

**The produce sections of grocery stores in Canada are largely non-GM but this could change soon.**

Currently, there are very few GM fruits and vegetables in our grocery stores: only a small amount of GM sweet corn, and a small amount of US-grown GM squash and GM papaya. A GM apple was sold for the first time in Canada recently, as apple slices. **A GM salmon is also being sold in Canada.**



## Processed Food Ingredients

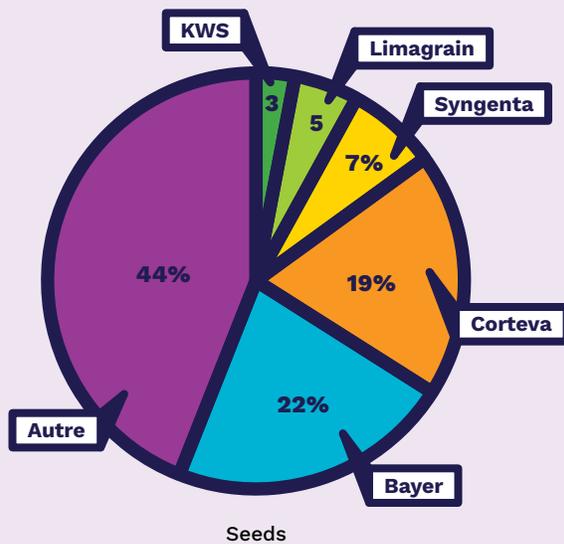
Most processed foods contain ingredients from canola, soy, and corn. Because most of these crop plants are now genetically modified, it is likely that many processed products such as salad dressings, soda, and granola bars, for example, contain GMO-derived ingredients. Genetically modified sugar beets are also processed into sugar.

## Animal Feed

A large portion of the major GM crops – corn, canola, and soy – are used for animal feed, to produce meat and dairy products.<sup>12</sup>

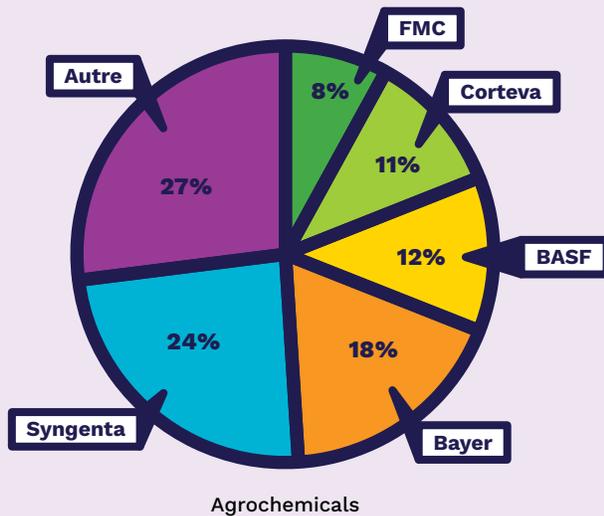
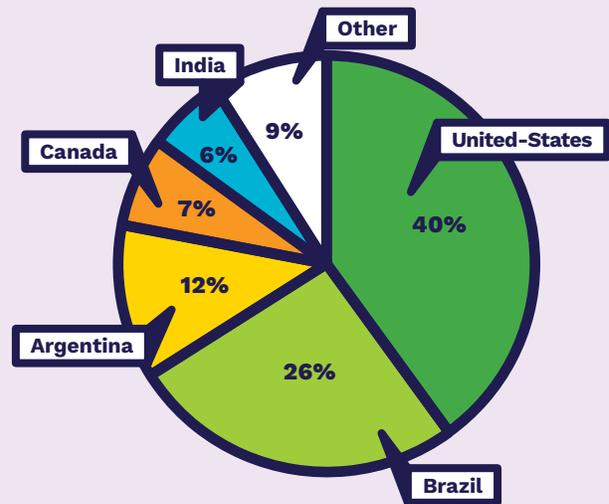
### Who Owns GMOs?

Five companies control 56% of the global seed market and 73% of the global pesticide market.<sup>13</sup> Before Bayer bought Monsanto in 2018, Monsanto was the world's largest seed and biotechnology company, and Bayer was the world's second-largest agrochemical (pesticide) company.



### Which countries grow GMOs?

Five countries grow 91% of all the GM crops in the world: US, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, and India.<sup>14</sup> Together, the US, Brazil, and Argentina grow 78%. Canada is the fourth largest producer of GMOs because we grow a lot of GM canola, as well as GM soy and corn. India is the fifth largest producer because of the amount of GM cotton grown in that country.



**Canadians were the first people in the world to eat a genetically modified animal: the GM Atlantic salmon.**

For more information and updates see [www.cban.ca/gmfoods](http://www.cban.ca/gmfoods)

# The Importance of Transparency

In Canada, genetically modified foods are approved and sold without transparency<sup>26</sup>: there is no mandatory labelling of GM foods, there has been no national democratic debate over the use of GM in food and farming, and regulatory decisions to approve GMOs rely on science from companies that is classified as “Confidential Business Information.” This report aims to fill some gaps in this lack of transparency.

## No Mandatory Labelling

There is no mandatory labelling of GM foods in Canada, although polls over the past 20 years have consistently shown that an overwhelming majority of Canadians – over 80% – want labelling.<sup>15</sup> 64 countries around the world have some form of mandatory GM food labelling.<sup>16</sup>

**Without labelling, genetically modified foods are hidden in grocery stores, leading to many questions about which GM foods are actually on the market, and where they are being sold.**

Canadians who want GM food labelling have named various reasons for wanting access to the information necessary to make their own informed consumer choices.<sup>17</sup>

## Here are some examples of concerns:

**Environmental:** Such as the impacts of pesticides used with GM crops,<sup>18</sup> and genetic contamination.<sup>19</sup>

**Health:** Questions about the safety of GMOs for human consumption,<sup>20</sup> and the safety of pesticides for farmers and consumers.<sup>21</sup>

**Farming:** Such as the impact of corporate control of seed choices and costs for farmers.<sup>22</sup>

**Ethics and religion:** Such as concerns over the ethics of patenting lifeforms.<sup>23,24</sup>

**Indigenous Peoples rights:** Such as the right to prior and informed consent.<sup>25</sup>

## **“You can't really claim that its science-based regulation if the science behind it is not peer-reviewable.”**

- Dr Conrad Brunk, co-chair of the Royal Society of Canada’s 2001 Expert Panel on the Future of Food Biotechnology, 2017.<sup>27</sup>

### **No Consultation**

Canadians often only learn about new GMOs once they are already approved for introduction into our food system. Decisions to approve GMOs are taken behind closed doors, without consulting farmers, consumers, or First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.<sup>28</sup>

For example, a genetically modified herbicide-tolerant (Roundup Ready) alfalfa was approved and registered for use despite widespread opposition from farmers across Canada,<sup>29</sup> including a day of action with rallies in 36 communities.<sup>30</sup> The Quebec Union of Agricultural Producers has since called for a permanent moratorium on the commercialization of GM alfalfa,<sup>31</sup> and farmer groups across the country are asking the government to cancel GM alfalfa registration.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the GM apple was approved even though the BC Fruit Growers Association<sup>33</sup> and Quebec Apple Producers<sup>34</sup> asked for a moratorium.

Even the decision to approve the world’s first GM food animal, a genetically modified salmon, was taken without public participation.

### **Little Independent Science**

**The Canadian government does not do its own safety testing.** Instead, Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency rely on information and data submitted by the companies requesting GMO approval. This information is not disclosed to the public or independent scientists because it is considered “Confidential Business Information.”<sup>35</sup>

Most of the science that regulators use to assess the safety of GMOs and pesticides is not public science, and therefore not peer-reviewed science.

In the absence of mandatory labelling, there is also no way to track any potential negative health impacts of eating GMOs.

**“Our salmon farmers encourage consumers to ask retailers where their salmon originates when they purchase.”**

- From the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Association’s position on genetically engineered salmon<sup>36</sup>

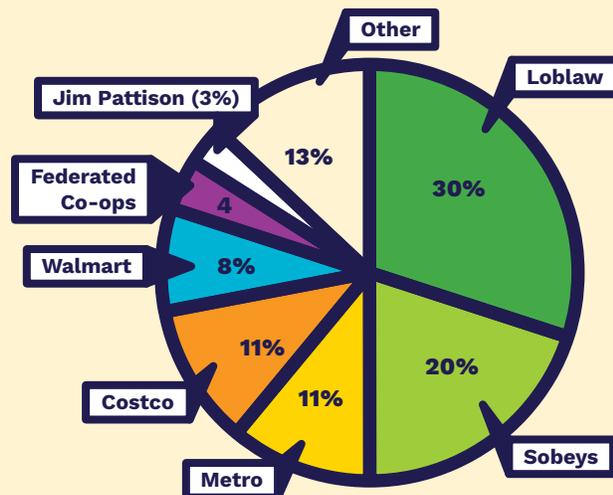
# Grocery Industry Snapshot

In Canada, five large chains control over 80% of grocery sales: Loblaw, Sobeys, Metro, Costco Canada, and Walmart Canada. This high level of corporate consolidation in grocery retail means that the big companies have a lot of power to make important purchasing decisions.

Different grocery chains dominate the market in different regions of the country. For example, Metro Inc. operates in Ontario and Quebec, and The Jim Pattison Group (Save-On-Foods etc.) and Federated Co-operatives Ltd. operate only in Western Canada.

**There are approximately 2,500 grocery chain locations across Canada but there are also around 6,900 independent grocery retailers.<sup>37\*</sup>**

**Grocery Chains in Canada<sup>38</sup>**



\* Independent retailer refers to independent, small and regional grocery stores or chains (can be publicly traded by not widely held); family controlled/owned or employee-owned coops. (Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers)

**“We have an oligopoly in food retail in Canada. It’s been very difficult for food manufacturing and it also puts smaller independent grocers at a disadvantage.”**

– Sylvain Charlebois,  
Dalhousie University, 2020<sup>39</sup>

**“Five large grocery retailers control more than 80% of Canada’s grocery stores, giving them tremendous influence over consumers’ access to products. The resulting power imbalance has long allowed large grocery retailers to arbitrarily shift their costs and risks disproportionately onto food, health, and consumer goods suppliers, along with farmers.”**

– Food, Health & Consumer  
Products of Canada, 2020<sup>40</sup>

## **The major grocery chains own many stores under different names:**

### **Loblaw Companies Limited**

- Axep
- Bloor Street Market
- Dominion
- Entrepôts Presto
- Club Entrepôt
- Extra Foods
- Fortinos
- Freshmart
- Intermarché
- Loblaws
- Lucky Dollar Foods
- Maxi
- Maxi & Cie
- NG Cash & Carry
- No Frills
- Pharmaprix
- Provigo
- The Real Canadian Superstore
- Loblaw
- Atlantic Superstore
- SaveEasy
- Shop Easy Foods
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- SuperValu
- T&T
- Valu-mart
- Real Canadian Wholesale Club
- Your Independent Grocer
- Zehrs Markets
- Zehrs Food Plus
- Zehrs Great

### **Jim Pattison**

- Bulkley Valley Wholesale
- Buy Low Foods
- Choices Markets
- Nature’s Fare Markets
- Nesters Market
- Overwaitea
- PriceSmart Foods
- Quality Foods
- Save on Foods
- Urban Fare

### **Sobeys Inc. (Empire Company Limited)**

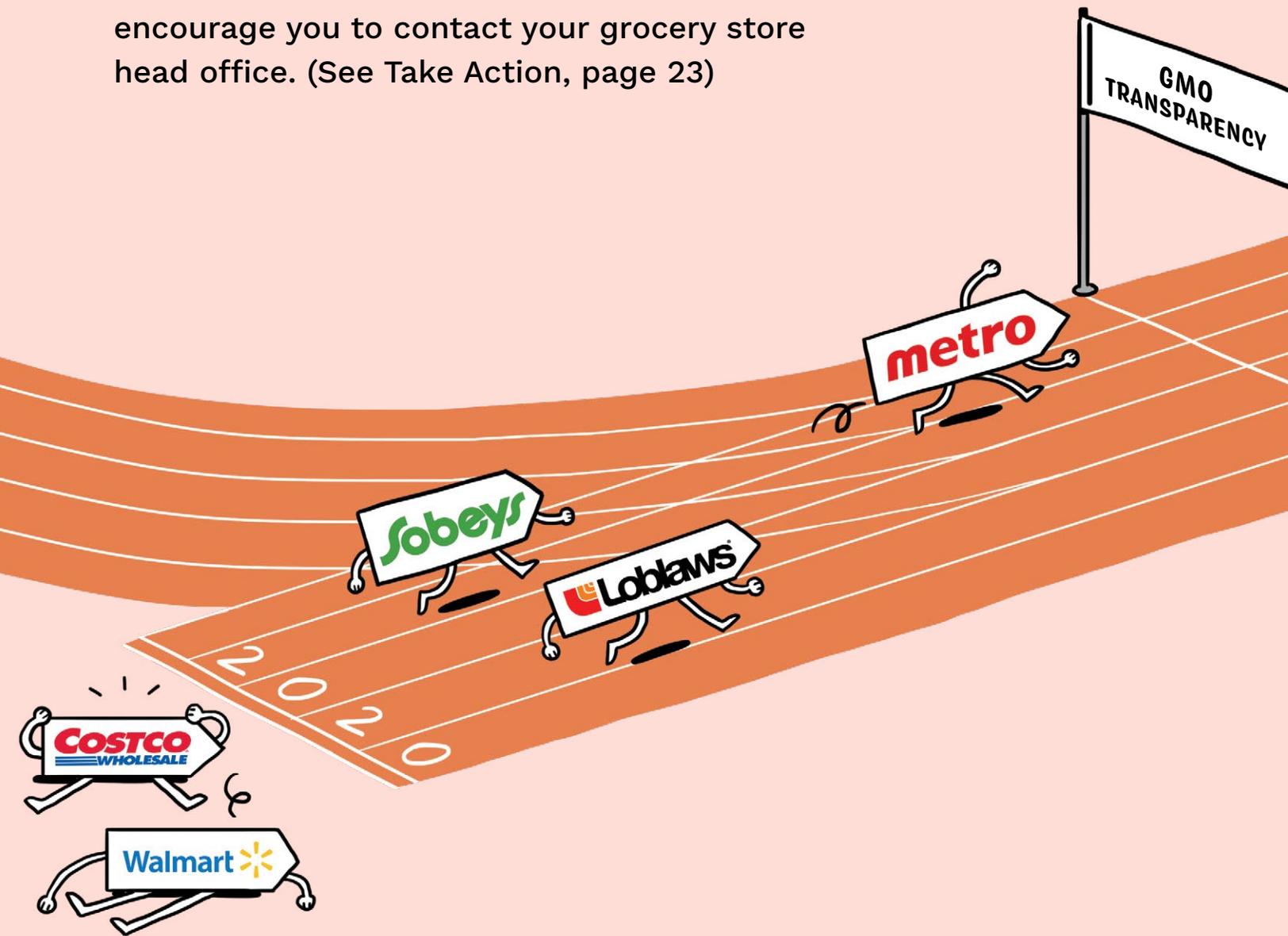
- Clover Farm
- Dépanneurs Boni-Soir
- Le Dépanneur Voisin
- Farm Boy
- Foodland
- FreshCo
- IGA
- IGA extra
- IGA express
- Kim Phat
- Lawtons Drugs
- Marché Bonichoix
- Les Marchés Tradition
- Needs Convenience
- Pete’s
- Price Chopper
- Rachelle-Béry
- Safeway
- Sobeys
- Thrifty Foods

### **Metro Inc.**

- Metro
- Metro Plus
- Adonis
- Brunet
- Brunet Plus
- Brunet Clinique
- Brunet Clini Plus
- Dépanneurs Servi-Express et GEM
- Food Basics
- Jean Coutu
- Marché Richelieu
- Marché Ami
- Première Moisson
- Super C

# Company Transparency Ranking

In July, we sent a questionnaire to Canada's major grocery chains. (See Appendix 1) It took a great deal of work to secure responses, requiring many follow-up emails and calls. Grocery stores will respond more quickly to direct inquiries from their individual customers and we therefore encourage you to contact your grocery store head office. (See Take Action, page 23)



## Ranking

This ranking is based on answers to seven questions, five of which were specifically on GMOS, and the other three on policies regarding local and organic foods and support for mandatory GM food labelling. (See the questionnaire, Appendix 1)

The company answers are summarized in the following table: The first line gives **1** point for providing a response and **0** for no response. The second line evaluates the clarity of the answer, giving **2** points for a clear answer and **0** if the answer is not clear. This means the chains are **rated out of a total of 21 points**. You can read the full answers from grocery stores in Appendices 3, 4, and 5.

**For GM salmon and GM sweet corn, Metro asks suppliers to sign a “traceability declaration form” to confirm that the fish and corn is not genetically modified.**

### 1. Metro: 19/21

Metro provided clear answers to all questions on GM products in their stores and is by far the most transparent in the company ranking this year.

Metro stated clearly that it does not sell or intend to sell GM salmon, GM apple, GM potatoes, or GM sweet corn, and that this policy applies throughout its stores: as whole foods, in in-house brands, and in all other products on the shelves. The company takes concrete steps to keep these four GM products out of their grocery stores.

For GM salmon and GM sweet corn, **Metro asks suppliers to sign a “traceability declaration form” to confirm that the fish and sweet corn is not genetically engineered.** For GM apples and GM potatoes, **“Metro does not buy or market GM products, and its teams work in close collaboration with suppliers for this purpose.”**

Metro did not say if it supports or opposes mandatory labelling of GMOS.

## **Loblaw says, “We do not support mandatory labelling of GMOs in Canada.”**

### **2. Loblaw: 8/21**

Loblaw placed second in the ranking because they responded to the questionnaire but their answers were not clear.

**Loblaw says, “Across our fresh departments, including seafood and produce, we have not knowingly sourced genetically modified salmon, potatoes, apples or sweet corn in the past, and currently have no plans to source them in the future.”** This statement does not tell customers whether or not these products are present in their grocery stores, only that the company does not plan to knowingly source them in the future. Loblaw also said, **“For our prepared food counters and control brands, to the best of our knowledge, they do not contain genetically modified salmon, potatoes, apples and sweet corn.”**

Loblaw says, “We do not support mandatory labelling of GMOs in Canada.”

### **4. Costco: 1/21**

A representative from Costco Canada phoned us to confirm that the company was not going to answer the questionnaire. We were not successful in securing a written confirmation of their refusal.

However, Costco has a statement on their website: **“Costco does not intend to sell genetically modified salmon.”**<sup>43</sup>

### **3. Sobeys: 5/21**

**Sobeys did not indicate if they are selling the GM, GM apple, GM potatoes, and/or GM sweet corn.**

Instead, Sobeys says, “studies over the past two decades continue to confirm that genetically modified (GM) foods are as safe and nutritious as conventionally produced food” and that “genetically modified crops bring many benefits to growers and consumers alike – with pest resistance, reduced pesticide use, healthy oils and trans fat replacement among them.” Some of these statements are incorrect: See GMOs 101 on pages 6-9, and our letter to Sobeys.<sup>41</sup>

Sobeys supports voluntary labelling rather than mandatory labelling. Sobeys also says “Mandatory GM labelling will increase costs on farmers, food processors and consumers.” However, this question of costs is disputed, with some studies indicating marginal potential increases.<sup>42</sup>

## **Sobeys responded to questions with broad statements about the benefits and safety of GMOs.**

### **5. Walmart: 0/21**

Walmart Canada did not respond to multiple emails and phone messages.

					
<b>GM Salmon</b> 	● ✓	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗
<b>GM Apple</b> 	● ✓	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗
<b>GM Sweet corn</b> 	● ✓	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗
<b>GM Potatoes</b> 	● ✓	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗

● Responded 1   ● Did not respond 0   ✓ Does not sell 2   ✗ Did not say 0  
 ✗ Costco did not respond but has a statement on their website

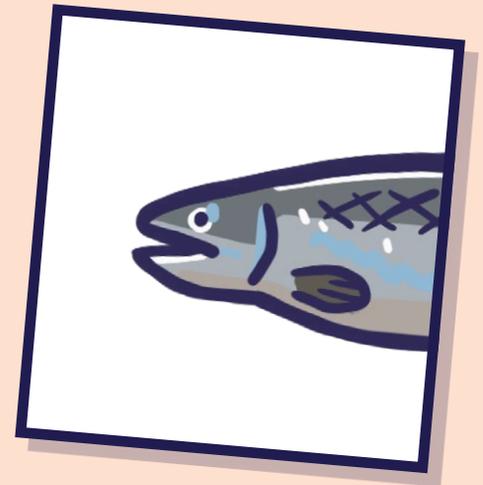
<b>Labelling</b>	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗
<b>Organics</b>	● ✓	● ✓	● ✗	● ✗	● ✗
<b>Local</b>	● ✓	● ✗	● ✓	● ✗	● ✗

● Responded 1   ● Did not respond 0   ✓ Clear position 2   ✗ Unclear position 0

<b>Total</b> (on 21)	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
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# GM Salmon

The GM Atlantic salmon is the first genetically modified food animal in the world. The company AquaBounty owns and produces a GM Atlantic salmon, called the “AquAdvantage” salmon. 42% of AquaBounty now is owned by the US company Third Security, led by billionaire Randal Kirk,<sup>44</sup> which also owns the GM apple company Okanagan Specialty Fruits.



## Why

The Atlantic salmon is genetically engineered with a growth hormone gene from Chinook salmon and genetic material from ocean pout to grow faster. The company says its GM salmon reaches market-size in almost 18 months instead of 26.<sup>45</sup>

## Approvals

Canada and the US are the only two countries in the world that have approved the production and consumption of this first GM food animal.

- 2013/2019: The Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada approved the production of GM salmon eggs and GM salmon in 2013. However, this decision was challenged in court<sup>46</sup> and the approval was ultimately finalized in 2019.
- 2016: Health Canada approved the GM salmon for human consumption.

## Market Status

Canadians were the first in the world to eat this GM animal. In 2017 and 2018, AquaBounty sold around 4.5 tonnes of GM salmon in Canada, produced at its small test plant in Panama (which closed in 2019). The GM salmon is now being produced at two on-land sites:

- In Prince Edward Island: Capacity 250 tonnes, with a first “harvest” expected in January 2021.
- In Indiana, USA: Capacity 1000 tonnes, with a first harvest expected in December 2020.

Most of the GM salmon coming from Panama was sold to foodservice (restaurants, caterers, and/or institutions), and some to the retail sector (grocery stores).<sup>47</sup>

**78% of Canadians said they are unwilling to eat GM salmon, even though it is approved by Health Canada.**<sup>48</sup>

## Issues

**Environmental Risks:** If genetically modified salmon or salmon eggs escape from fish farms, they could put endangered wild salmon at further risk. Fisheries and Oceans Canada concluded that the hazard to wild Atlantic salmon populations is high if the GM salmon escape.<sup>49</sup> Research shows that GM salmon could out-compete wild salmon for food, or breed with wild salmon or other species such as brown trout.<sup>50</sup> However, if escape happens, these risks are minimized because all of the GM salmon will be female and most or all (≥98.5%) will be sterile (via a technology called triploidy).<sup>51</sup>

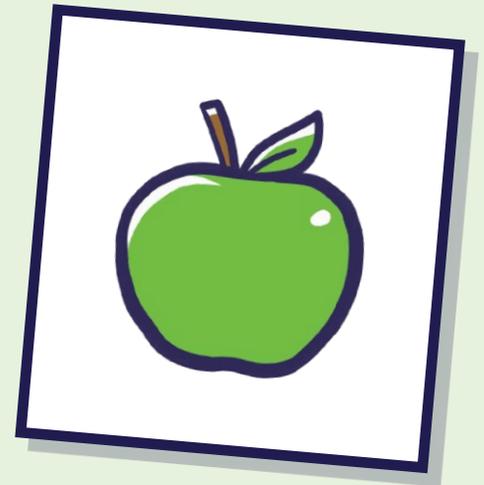
**“The new threat posed by genetic engineering of animals, our sacred relatives, poses a threat to all of humanity.”**

- Charlie Greg Sark and Bob Chamberlin<sup>52</sup>

For more information and updates see [www.cban.ca/fish](http://www.cban.ca/fish)

# GM Apple

The genetically modified non-browning apple, called the “Arctic Apple”, was developed by the small company Okanagan Specialty Fruits which is now owned by the US venture capital firm Third Security, controlled by billionaire Randal Kirk.<sup>53,54</sup> Third Security also owns 42% of the GM salmon company AquaBounty. All of the GM apple orchards are in the US, run by Okanagan Specialty Fruits.



## Why

The apple is genetically engineered to not turn brown after the apple flesh is cut. The company says the GM apple slices have a shelf life of 28 days. The company has silenced a gene in the apple that controls browning by inserting modified apple DNA as well as genetic material from a virus and two bacteria.<sup>55</sup>

## Approvals

Canada and the United States are the only countries that have approved the GM apple for growing and eating.

- 2015: Health Canada approved the first two varieties of the GM non-browning apple as safe to eat (GM Golden Delicious and GM Granny Smith).
- 2018: Health Canada approved a non-browning GM Fuji apple.

## Market Status

**The GM apples are currently only sold as slices, not as whole apples.** After the 2019 harvest, a small amount of pre-sliced GM apples was sold into Canada for use in the foodservice industry.<sup>56</sup> This means that GM apple slices could have been served in Canada in university cafeterias and hotels, by catering services, in hospital and prison meals, at restaurants, or through **ready-made salads and fruit trays in our grocery stores.** In the US, the company is selling individual snack bags of apple slices and dried apple chips with

the company’s “Arctic” logo, and these could also be sold in Canada soon.

## Issues

**Consumer and Farmer Rejection:** In the absence of mandatory labelling in Canada, consumers and apple producers reacted negatively to the approval of the GM apple.<sup>57</sup> Farmers were concerned that a negative consumer reaction to the GM apple could hurt the market for all apples. In 2012, 69% of Canadians said they did not want the GM apple approved.<sup>58</sup> In 2020, 75% of people surveyed in Quebec said they did not want to eat the GM apple.<sup>59</sup>

**“Our concern is the negative publicity for apples in general caused by the controversy over this GM apple...The public thinks of apples as a pure, natural, healthy and nutritional fruit. GM apples are a risk to our market image.”**

- Jeet Dukhia, President, BC Fruit Growers Association, 2013<sup>60</sup>

For more information and updates see [www.cban.ca/apple](http://www.cban.ca/apple)

## ID Card

# GM Sweet Corn

There is a small amount of GM sweet corn seed sold in Canada and the US<sup>61</sup> by the companies Bayer (formerly Monsanto)<sup>62</sup> and Syngenta.<sup>63</sup> However, most genetically modified corn is grain corn that ends up as ingredients in processed food or as animal feed – this grain corn is totally different from sweet corn that is sold as a fresh vegetable in our produce sections.<sup>64</sup>



## Why

GM sweet corn is engineered to be toxic to particular insect pests. All of the GM sweet corn on the market is also engineered to be herbicide tolerant so that the plants will survive spraying of either Roundup (glyphosate) or Liberty (glyphosate) herbicides.<sup>65</sup>

- To be insect-resistant, the sweet corn is genetically engineered with genes from a soil bacterium called *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt. The Bt toxin attaches to receptors in the gut of certain insects, rupturing the gut and killing the insect.
- The GM sweet corn is also engineered with genes to create new proteins that make the plants resistant to herbicides.

## Approvals

Health Canada started approving GM insect-resistant and herbicide-tolerant traits for use in corn in 1996. Syngenta started selling sweet corn with GM traits around 2000 and Monsanto launched their first GM sweet corn in 2011.<sup>66</sup>

## Market Status

**Very little GM sweet corn is sold in Canada.** Tests of sweet corn in grocery stores, conducted by Vigilance OGM and CBAN, found some GM sweet corn in 2013 and 2014 but tests since then have found none.<sup>67</sup> In response to consumer concerns,

several grocery stores sent their sweet corn suppliers “a letter confirming their commitment not to sell them corn from genetically modified seeds,” as stated by Metro in its 2020 response to our questionnaire (see appendix 3). Farmers have also confirmed to us that the other major chains are making the same request for non-GM sweet corn.

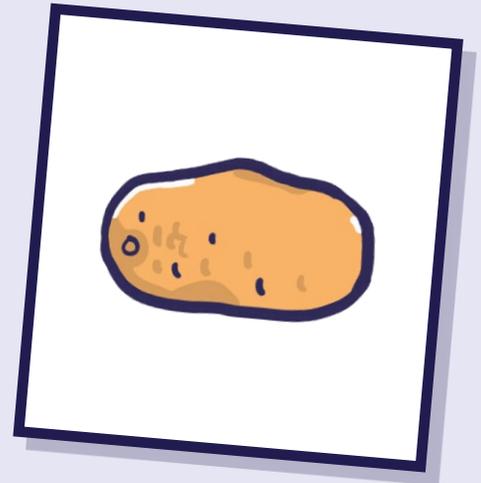
## Issues

**Environmental Impacts:** All of the GM sweet corn in Canada is both insect-resistant (Bt) and herbicide-tolerant.<sup>68</sup> However, the federal government does not track how much or where GM crops are grown, or how they change pesticide use. The GM technology transforms the corn plant itself into a pesticide. The plants produce a toxin that may have negative environmental impacts, including on soil and other organisms.<sup>69</sup> Insect pests are developing resistance to the toxins,<sup>70</sup> just as more weeds are developing resistance to herbicides.<sup>71</sup> This could mean more pesticides. (Herbicide sales have increased in Canada by 243% since GM crops have been introduced.)<sup>72</sup>

For more information and updates see [www.cban.ca/corn](http://www.cban.ca/corn)

# GM Potatoes

The large US agriculture firm J.R. Simplot Company sells genetically modified potatoes with a number of GM traits that are approved but not yet sold in Canada. These are the first GM potatoes approved since Monsanto's insect-resistant potatoes, which are no longer on the market.



## Why

Simplot's potatoes were genetically engineered using genes from wild and cultivated potatoes to suppress other genes in the potato, resulting in variety of GM traits.<sup>73</sup> These include reduced bruising and black spots, a lower amount of the amino acid that produces the natural chemical acrylamide during cooking, late blight tolerance, and lower sugar levels (to help potato storage and processing).

## Approvals

- **An earlier GM insect-resistant potato from Monsanto was approved in Canada and the US in 1995 but the company removed it from the market in 2001.**
- In 2016 and 2017, multiple GM traits for use in Simplot's potatoes were approved in Canada.

## Market Status

- The GM potatoes are not yet sold in Canada.<sup>74</sup>
- They are grown in large field trials in Prince Edward Island, Ontario, and Manitoba. The GM potatoes grown in Ontario are being sold in the US.<sup>75</sup>
- **The GM potatoes are sold in the US.** In the US, Simplot's White Russet™ GM fresh whole potatoes are sold in grocery stores (in branded bags), and to restaurants and other foodservice. Also in the US, a small amount

of GM potatoes are sold in the "fresh cut," refrigerated salads, and chip market sectors.<sup>76</sup>

## Issues

**Consumer rejection:** By 1999, consumer rejection was strong enough to convince McCain Foods, the world's largest manufacturer of frozen potato products, to decide not to use GM potatoes.<sup>77</sup> Without mandatory labelling in Canada, consumer concerns about GM potatoes could reduce potato consumption in general.

**In a 2020 poll, 75% of Canadians said they would not eat a GM potato even if approved as safe by Health Canada.<sup>78</sup>**

**"Since 1999 McCain Foods has abided by a policy of not using genetically modified potatoes in any of our products globally. This policy holds true today..."**

- McCain Foods, 2020<sup>79</sup>

For more information and updates see [www.cban.ca/potatoes](http://www.cban.ca/potatoes)

# Take Action

There are many reasons why Canadians want to know where GMOs are in the grocery store. Basic transparency can provide consumers with the ability to choose.

Your actions can make a difference. Your food choices can help protect our environment, support your health, and build a better future for food and farming.

## Support the Solution

Many food producers, such as organic farmers, already grow food in an ecological way. You can support these farmers through your food choices in the grocery store and at the local farmers' market.

- Ecological farming practices improve soil health, protect water resources, reduce the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, reduce climate-disrupting greenhouse gas emissions, and promote seed diversity and biodiversity on and off the farm.<sup>80</sup>
- When you buy local food and buy directly from farmers, your purchases put more money directly into farmers' pockets.

**“This really just comes down to Canadian retailers and food service providers – once they demonstrate interest, we have plenty of growers lined up that would like to grow for us.”**

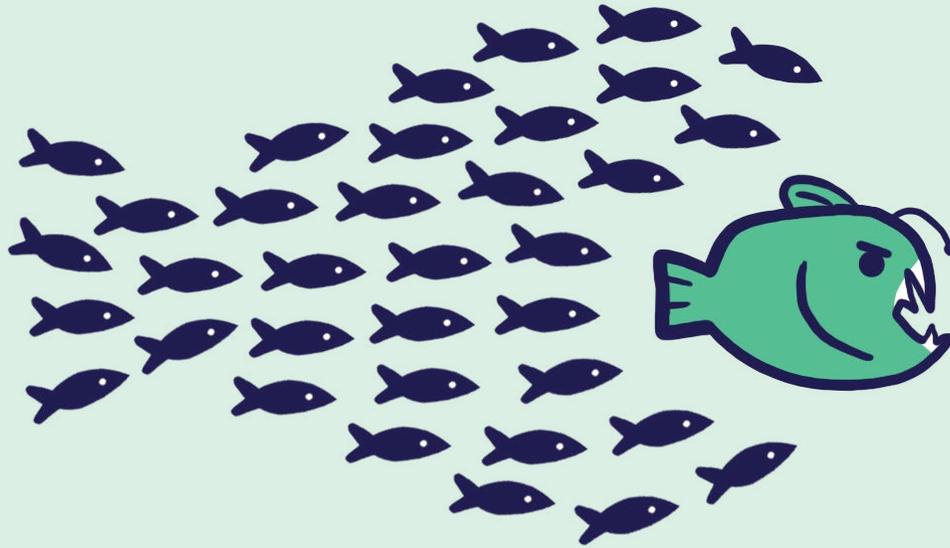
– Doug Cole, Director of Marketing and Biotech Affairs at J.R. Simplot Company, seller of GM seed potatoes, 2019<sup>82</sup>

- Where you shop can also be a part of the solution. Your independent, local food store and local food businesses often have more flexibility to purchase local and seasonal food, build relationships with local farmers, and invest back into your community.

## Organic is a non-GMO choice

The ecological system of organic farming follows a national standard that prohibit the use of genetically modified seeds and synthetic pesticides. Worldwide, organic farmers follow environmental and animal welfare practices based on the four principles of health, ecology, fairness and care.<sup>81</sup>





### Demand Transparency

Many grocery stores make an effort to be transparent to their customers. **Your grocery store, whether a large chain or a small independent shop, can be a transparency leader.**

**Ask at your local store:** Print or email the questionnaire and background document (see appendix 1 and 2, or contact us) to ask your local store. Share the company answers with us: [info@cban.ca](mailto:info@cban.ca).

### Contact the head office of the major grocery chains

 **Call**  **Write**

 **Ask at your local store**

#### Metro

1 866 595-5554  
[consommateurs@metro.ca](mailto:consommateurs@metro.ca)

#### Loblaw

1 800 296-2332  
[customer@loblaw.ca](mailto:customer@loblaw.ca)

#### Walmart

1 800 328-0402  
[corporateaffairscanada@walmart.com](mailto:corporateaffairscanada@walmart.com)

#### Sobeys

1 800 994-0442  
[customer.service@sobeys.com](mailto:customer.service@sobeys.com)

#### Costco

1 800 463-3783  
[customerservice@costco.ca](mailto:customerservice@costco.ca)

To take more actions see  
[www.cban.ca](http://www.cban.ca)

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# Appendix

1. Questionnaire to Grocery Chains
2. Market Status of GM Foods
3. Metro Response
4. Loblaw Response
5. Sobeys Response

## 1. Questionnaire to Grocery Chains



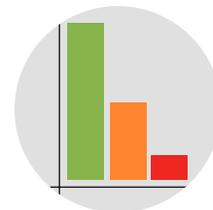
Le document français suit l'anglais

# TRANSPARENCY QUESTIONNAIRE: GMOs in Our Grocery Stores

Canada is the only developed nation without some form of mandatory labelling of genetically engineered (genetically modified or GM) foods. In the absence of labelling in our grocery stores, Vigilance OGM and the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) are asking your company provide transparency on GM foods for your customers.

For over 20 years, over 80% of Canadians have said they want mandatory labelling, including 89% of Canadians in the most recent poll (Dalhousie University, 2018). Consumers are also increasingly concerned about the environmental and health impacts of pesticide use in food production: After more than 20 years of commercialization, 88% of genetically modified crops are herbicide-tolerant (tolerant to one or more herbicides), resulting in increased herbicide use. The sale of the world's first GM animal, a GM salmon, makes transparency on the market even more urgent for many customers.

We are asking a series of questions in order to provide transparency to Canadians. The result will be a ranking of grocery stores that will be published nationally. **We request your response before the end of the week of September 7, 2020.**



For more information about GMOs on the Canadian market please see the background document provided or consult [www.cban.ca/gmfoods](http://www.cban.ca/gmfoods), or please contact us for further information.

For more information on Vigilance OGM please see [www.vigilanceogm.org/a-propos/description](http://www.vigilanceogm.org/a-propos/description) and on CBAN see [www.cban.ca/about-us](http://www.cban.ca/about-us)

Thank you in advance for providing this important information to Canadian consumers.

Contact: Lucy Sharratt, CBAN 902 209 4906 | [info@cban.ca](mailto:info@cban.ca)

## 1. Questionnaire to Grocery Chains (continued)

# TRANSPARENCY QUESTIONNAIRE: GMOs in Our Grocery Stores

Company Name

Name of the grocery chain(s)/store names

(Each company is invited to answer as many times as necessary to provide the many variant policies of different brands.)

Contact Name(s) and Title(s)

Email address(es)

Phone number(s)



**1. Does your company support the implementation of mandatory labelling of GMOs in Canada?**

YES  NO

Would you like to explain ?

If so, what actions would you be willing to take to support mandatory labelling?

2

# 1. Questionnaire to Grocery Chains (continued)

Transparency Questionnaire : GMOs in Our Grocery Stores



## 2. Does your company sell, or will you sell genetically modified salmon in the future?

- at the seafood counter      YES       NO
- in in-house brands      YES       NO
- all products on shelves      YES       NO

Would you like to explain ?

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that GM salmon is not in your stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?



## 3. Does your company sell, or will you sell a genetically modified apple in the future?

- in the produce section      YES       NO
- in in-house prepared foods      YES       NO
- in-house brands      YES       NO

Would you like to explain ?

## 1. Questionnaire to Grocery Chains (continued)

Transparency Questionnaire : GMOs in Our Grocery Stores

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that this GM apple is not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?



**4. Does your company sell, or will you sell genetically modified sweetcorn in the future?**

YES  NO

Would you like to explain ?

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that this GM sweetcorn is not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?



**5. Does your company sell, or will your company sell genetically modified potatoes in the future?**

- in the produce section YES  NO
- in-house brands YES  NO
- in in-house prepared foods YES  NO

# 1. Questionnaire to Grocery Chains (continued)

Transparency Questionnaire : GMOs in Our Grocery Stores

Would you like to explain ?

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that these GM potatoes are not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?



**6. Do you have policies and practices in place to provide customers with a wide range of organic choices?**

YES  NO

Would you like to explain ?



**7. Do you have policies and practices that support sourcing of local products to support local producers and provide local food choices?**

YES  NO

Would you like to explain ?

## 2. Market Status Update: GM Foods in Canada

### BACKGROUND

July 2020

# Market Status Update: GM Foods in Canada

Most genetically modified crops (corn, canola, soy and sugarbeet) are used for processed food ingredients.

New GM whole foods are entering the market in Canada and the U.S. but, currently, in very small amounts.



### GM Salmon

The genetically modified (fast-growing) Atlantic salmon (AquaAdvantage) is now being produced at a new facility in Indiana, USA (the first “harvest” is due before the end of 2020, of up to 1,2000 metric tonnes/year) and at a new site in Prince Edward Island (the first “harvest” is due in early January 2021, of 250 metric tonnes/year). These two facilities are currently the only sites producing the GM salmon in the world and both are owned and run by the company AquaBounty. [www.cban.ca/fish](http://www.cban.ca/fish)



### GM Apple

A small amount of pre-sliced genetically modified (non-browning) Golden Delicious and Granny Smith apples (Arctic Apple) are being sold into Canada. The sliced GM apples are sold in bags (5oz, 10oz) for individual sale or for use in foodservice (40oz), or as dried apple chips in snack-sized bags. All the orchards are currently in the U.S. and are owned and run by the GM apple company Okanagan Speciality Fruits. [www.cban.ca/apple](http://www.cban.ca/apple)



### GM Potatoes

Genetically modified potatoes are sold in the U.S. but not yet in Canada. The GM potatoes, from the company Simplot, are grown in the U.S. and in limited test plots in Canada (for reduced bruising and black spots, a lower amount of the amino acid that produces the natural chemical acrylamide during cooking, and/or late blight tolerance and lower sugar levels). In the U.S., the whole potatoes are sold in bags in produce sections with the trademark name “White Russet”, and there are also GM potatoes for the chip processing market. [www.cban.ca/potato](http://www.cban.ca/potato)



### GM Sweetcorn

Genetically modified (insect-resistant) sweetcorn is sold in seed catalogues in Canada and the U.S. and small amounts may be grown. Our testing of sweetcorn sold in grocery stores and farmer stands in Canada shows very little or no GM sweetcorn on the market. [www.cban.ca/corn](http://www.cban.ca/corn)



### Certified Organic Products

The Canada Organic standard prohibits the use of genetically modified products and all organic products are therefore non-GM by definition. In addition, many organic products carry the additional certification of the Non-GMO Project which tests for potential GM contamination. [www.cban.ca/organics](http://www.cban.ca/organics)

More info: [cban.ca/gmfoods](http://cban.ca/gmfoods)

Contact: Lucy Sharratt Canadian Biotechnology Action Network  
902 209 4906 | [info@cban.ca](mailto:info@cban.ca)



### 3. Metro Response



September 15, 2020

Mr. Thibault Rehn  
Coordinator  
Vigilance OGM

Dear Mr. Rehn,

We are pleased to return the completed questionnaire on our responsible procurement policies and more specifically as they pertain to GMOs.

In 2017, METRO adopted the [Responsible Procurement Framework](#), as well as the [Supplier Code of Conduct](#), which govern its purchasing practices. Indeed, responsible procurement issues are key concerns for the Corporation, and METRO recognizes the importance that must be given to GMOs. GMO-related issues are complex. They raise many questions with no clear consensus on the positions to be taken. METRO tracks the scientific developments and collaborates with food industry stakeholders, including its fellow members of the Retail Council of Canada, to identify best practices and make appropriate and informed decisions.

Among METRO's commitments under the *Responsible Procurement Framework* are efforts to expand the Corporation's offer of organic products, which, by definition, do not contain GMOs. In addition, in 2019, METRO entered a partnership with NON-GMO Project Verified—the label for consumers looking to avoid products that contain ingredients derived from genetic engineering. The label appears on METRO's Naturalia and Mieux-être/Life Smart gluten-free products.

METRO reports on its commitments, including those pledged under the *Responsible Procurement Framework*, in its annual *Corporate Responsibility Report*. The most recent edition is available [here](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra Leclerc".

**Alexandra Leclerc**  
Responsible Procurement Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie-Claude Bacon".

**Marie-Claude Bacon**  
Vice-President  
Public Affairs and Communications

### 3. Metro Response (continued)

September 15, 2020

<b>Company name:</b>	Metro inc.
<b>Name of the grocery chains for which the form is completed:</b>	Metro, Metro Plus, Super C, Food Basics, Adonis, Première Moisson.
<b>Contact name and title:</b>	Marie-Claude Bacon, Vice-President, Public Affairs and Communications  Alexandra Leclerc, Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture specialist / Animal welfare specialist
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:mbacon@metro.ca">mbacon@metro.ca</a> <a href="mailto:Alexandra.Leclerc@metro.ca">Alexandra.Leclerc@metro.ca</a>
<b>Telephone:</b>	514-643-1086

**1. Does your company support the implementation of mandatory labelling of GMOs in Canada? If so, what actions would you be willing to take to support mandatory labelling?**

See our cover letter.

**2. Does your company sell, or will you sell genetically modified salmon in the future?**

- At the seafood counter: **NO**
- In in-house brands: **NO**
- All products on shelves: **NO**

**If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that GM salmon is not in your stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?**

METRO does not wish to market products containing genetically modified salmon. METRO clearly states its position to its fish and seafood suppliers via its traceability declaration form, which must be completed by the supplier before its products are sold in stores. This applies to all fish and seafood products: fresh, frozen and canned, processed and not. The form is sent at least once a year to all suppliers.

### 3. Metro Response (continued)

3. Does your company sell, or will you sell a genetically modified apple in the future?

- In the produce section: NO
- In in-house prepared foods: NO
- In in-house brands: NO

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that this GM apple is not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?

In 2017, METRO adopted the [Responsible Procurement Framework](#) and [Supplier Code of Conduct](#). GMOs were taken into consideration when developing the documents.

Though the Corporation has not made a public commitment not to sell genetically modified products, METRO does not buy or market GM products, and its teams work in close collaboration with suppliers for this purpose. Should a supplier offer a genetically modified product, METRO would refuse it.

4. Does your company sell, or will you sell genetically modified sweetcorn in the future?  
NO

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that this GM sweetcorn is not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?

In 2017, METRO adopted the [Responsible Procurement Framework](#) and [Supplier Code of Conduct](#). GMOs were taken into consideration when developing the documents.

Specifically with regard to sweet corn, in November 2014, METRO sent a letter to all its suppliers asking them to provide a letter confirming their commitment not to sell corn grown from genetically modified seeds or containing genetically modified organisms to METRO or any of the Corporation's merchants. All new supplier since have been advised of our policy.

5. Does your company sell, or will your company sell genetically modified potatoes in the future?

- In the produce section: NO
- In in-house brands: NO
- In in-house prepared foods: NO

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that these GM potatoes are not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?

### 3. Metro Response (continued)

In 2017, METRO adopted the [Responsible Procurement Framework](#) and [Supplier Code of Conduct](#). GMOs were taken into consideration when developing the documents.

Though the Corporation has not made a public commitment not to sell genetically modified products, METRO does not buy or market GM products, and its teams work in close collaboration with suppliers for this purpose. Should a supplier offer a genetically modified product, METRO would refuse it.

**6. Do you have policies and practices in place to provide customers with a wide range of organic choices?**

As stated in its [Responsible Procurement Framework](#), METRO committed to expanding its offer of organic products, which, by definition, are non-GMO. In the 2019 fiscal year, the number of products in the Irresistibles Organic and Irresistibles Naturalia lines rose by 45% ([Corporate Responsibility Report for FY 2019](#)).

**7. Do you have policies and practices that support sourcing of local products to support local producers and provide local food choices?**

In 2013, METRO adopted the [Local Purchasing Policy](#), which is based on three guiding principles that optimize the accessibility and promotion of local products in Québec and Ontario: customer needs, supplier offers and coherence with METRO's business practices.

The key principles that govern local purchasing at METRO are:

- Support for regional producers and processors with which our merchants have developed direct ties;
- Support for provincial producers and processors;
- Support for innovative suppliers.

In Québec

In summer 2019, METRO launched the *Proud Local Grocers* campaign on its platforms to invite customers to choose Québec products. METRO also continues to increase the visibility of the Aliments du Québec label, specifically through promotional offers and shelf labels ([Corporate Responsibility Report for FY 2019](#)).

In Ontario

In November 2019, Metro Ontario presented the Spotlight on Local event at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, which aims to highlight local products and producers. Metro and Food Basics distinguished themselves by winning 29 of the 60 awards of the Foodland Ontario Retailer Awards Program—a competition that recognizes best practices in the agri-food industry to display and promote Ontario products ([Corporate Responsibility Report for FY 2019](#)).

Note: All the documents referenced in this questionnaire are available [here](#).

## 4. Loblaw Response



December 11, 2020

Dear Vigilance OGM,

Thank you for contacting Loblaw and engaging in a dialogue about genetically modified organisms (GMOs). We are devoted to ensuring the products we sell in our stores are safe, high-quality, and responsibly sourced and produced.

We are committed to helping Canadian's live life well. As a retailer, we believe it is our responsibility to provide choice for our customers, however they want to feed themselves and their families. We understand that some customers prefer not to consume foods containing GMOs. For those customers, we offer a large selection of organic foods as an alternative, and have actively expanded our offering to meet their evolving demands.

In 2019, we added 87 certified products to our [PC® Organics](#) line for a total of more than 500 products (across various categories, include fresh, frozen, centre-of-store and home). All are third-party certified and continue to meet Canada's organic standards, which emphasize sustainability and a holistic approach to agriculture. We also source more than 1500 national brand certified organic products, for a total offering of more than 2000 organic products across our network of stores.

Across our fresh departments, including seafood and produce, we have not knowingly sourced genetically modified salmon, potatoes, apples or sweetcorn in the past, and currently have no plans to source them in the future. For our prepared food counters and control brands, to the best of our knowledge, they do not contain genetically modified salmon, potatoes, apples and sweetcorn.

At this time, we do not support the implementation of mandatory labelling of GMOs in Canada. We will continue to track developments related to GMO and GE foods given that various products sold in Canadian grocery stores contain these ingredients and it remains an important topic for some of our customers.

Regards,

Corporate Social Responsibility Team  
For CSR-related inquiries, please contact us at [csr@loblaw.ca](mailto:csr@loblaw.ca)

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## 5. Sobeys Response

# TRANSPARENCY QUESTIONNAIRE: GMOs in Our Grocery Stores

**Company Name** Sobeys Inc.

**Name of the grocery chain(s)/store names**

(Each company is invited to answer as many times as necessary to provide the many variant policies of different brands.)

Sobeys, FreshCo, Foodland, IGA, Safeway, Thrifty Foods

**Contact Name(s) and Title(s)**

Genevieve Paradis, Sustainability Specialist

**Email address(es)** genevieve.paradis@sobeys.com

**Phone number(s)** (514) 324-1010 #3603 (but teleworking until further notice)



**1. Does your company support the implementation of mandatory labelling of GMOs in Canada?**

YES  NO

Would you like to explain ?

- Consumer choice is promoted through voluntary labelling. We support the principle of mandatory labelling when there are food safety or health issues and when the risks are widely recognized and scientifically proven (as in the case of allergens).
- Mandatory GM labelling will increase costs on farmers, food processors and consumers.
- Canada's Parliament has already thoroughly debated and voted against mandatory GM labelling.

If so, what actions would you be willing to take to support mandatory labelling?

[Empty text box for response]

## 5. Sobeys Response (continued)

Transparency Questionnaire : GMOs in Our Grocery Stores



### 2. Does your company sell, or will you sell genetically modified salmon in the future?

- at the seafood counter      YES       NO
- in in-house brands      YES       NO
- all products on shelves      YES       NO

Would you like to explain ?

We are aligned with the position of the Retail Council of Canada, which is that:

- Studies over the past two decades continue to confirm that genetically modified (GM) foods are as safe and nutritious as conventionally produced food.
- Genetically modified crops bring many benefits to growers and consumers alike – with pest resistance, reduced pesticide use, healthy oils and trans fat replacement among them.

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that GM salmon is not in your stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?



### 3. Does your company sell, or will you sell a genetically modified apple in the future?

- in the produce section      YES       NO
- in in-house prepared foods      YES       NO
- in-house brands      YES       NO

Would you like to explain ?

We are aligned with the position of the Retail Council of Canada, which is that:

- Studies over the past two decades continue to confirm that genetically modified (GM) foods are as safe and nutritious as conventionally produced food.
- Genetically modified crops bring many benefits to growers and consumers alike – with pest resistance, reduced pesticide use, healthy oils and trans fat replacement among them.

## 5. Sobeys Response (continued)

Transparency Questionnaire : GMOs in Our Grocery Stores

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that this GM apple is not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?



**4. Does your company sell, or will you sell genetically modified sweetcorn in the future?**

YES  NO

Would you like to explain ?

We are aligned with the position of the Retail Council of Canada, which is that:

- Studies over the past two decades continue to confirm that genetically modified (GM) foods are as safe and nutritious as conventionally produced food.
- Genetically modified crops bring many benefits to growers and consumers alike – with pest resistance, reduced pesticide use, healthy oils and trans fat replacement among them.

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that this GM sweetcorn is not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?



**5. Does your company sell, or will your company sell genetically modified potatoes in the future?**

- in the produce section YES  NO
- in-house brands YES  NO
- in in-house prepared foods YES  NO

## 5. Sobeys Response (continued)

Transparency Questionnaire : GMOs in Our Grocery Stores

Would you like to explain ?

We are aligned with the position of the Retail Council of Canada, which is that:

- Studies over the past two decades continue to confirm that genetically modified (GM) foods are as safe and nutritious as conventionally produced food.
- Genetically modified crops bring many benefits to growers and consumers alike – with pest resistance, reduced pesticide use, healthy oils and trans fat replacement among them.

If not, what policies and measures do you have in place to ensure that these GM potatoes are not present in your grocery stores? Is there information or action we or others can provide to support your policies and measures?



**6. Do you have policies and practices in place to provide customers with a wide range of organic choices?**

YES  NO

Would you like to explain ?

Sobeys is proud to offer a wide variety of organic choices, both through our private brand as well as national brands.



**7. Do you have policies and practices that support sourcing of local products to support local producers and provide local food choices?**

YES  NO

Would you like to explain ?

Staying true to our roots is one way we create better products for Canadian families. Our Sobeys banner began as a local family run business in Atlantic Canada. To honour this heritage, we strongly support local producers, growers and suppliers across Canada. Actively pursuing opportunities to collaborate with local and national partners who share our values and deliver on concepts that demonstrate sustainable innovations is a hallmark of our purchasing program.

For more details : <https://corporate.sobeys.com/corporate-responsibility/our-local-partners/>



