

Any Way You Splice It

By: Betsy Bearden

It has come to my attention that more of my family and friends seem to be eating less meat these days. Some have completely given it up, and I am talking about those who used to make fun of me because I didn't (eat meat). Bygones will be bygones and for whatever reason they have chosen to jump on the veggie wagon, I am onboard with them. Too bad they have chosen a time when veggies are becoming more and more genetically altered by huge corporations such as Monsanto and such, and less and less approved by the FDA. Money goes a long way in some cases, but then, as usual, I digress.

But nonetheless, eating veggies even though the morphing of them is happening under our very own noses on a regular basis rather than eating meat that is morphed and pumped full of hormones and antibiotics and other nasty stuff makes consumption of the GMO veggies the lesser of two evils—right? Sigh... Even the animals that are consuming these GMO products and being tested with them are getting sick.

What is GMO: GMO is a genetically modified organism that is the result of genetic engineering. DNA molecules are taken from different sources and are combined to create new genes. The DNA molecules are applied to an organism rendering it modified. One example of this would be taking a strain of a certain bacteria and injecting it into corn whereby the corn is now able to generate its own insecticide. We consume this, and we are the guinea pigs, because no long-term testing or studies have been done on humans. The evidence available through research that GMO corn (or any GMO product for that matter) is not good for us and it proves time and again that GMO is simply not safe.

Genetic engineering was made possible through the discovery of DNA and the creation of the first recombinant DNA molecules by Paul Berg in 1972. The first commercial cultivation of GMO crops was in 1996. But all of this goes far beyond grains, fruits, and vegetables. Nothing is impervious to gene splicing...nothing.

Many of you may have heard of what is happening to fish such as tilapia and trout, but salmon in particular. Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, think again. Aquaculture (fish farmers) can't keep up with the demand anymore so guess what, instead of waiting via conventional methods for salmon to become mature, they are fed growth hormones, and are also fed pellets that change their pale flesh to a robust pink like the salmon caught in the wild so it's more appealing to the consumer. Never, ever, ever purchase Atlantic farmed salmon, or any kind of farmed fish for that matter, please! But as if this isn't gross enough, listen up.

How many of you have heard of Frankenfish? A company called AquaBounty has actually created a Frankenfish: it is Chinook salmon and ocean pout (an eel-like fish). The ocean pout receives a gene from the salmon and voilà: you have the new and improved AquaAadvantage Salmon. This hybrid will grow faster and will mature at an accelerated rate over "real" salmon. Also interesting, the ocean pout contains antifreeze-like properties that will allow the GMO salmon to survive colder water temperatures. I guess this gene spliced pool of fish won't bother many people, but here's the deal: what if the GMO fish gets out in the wild, and mates with other salmon species. Bye-bye to salmon as we know it. This Frankenfish is slated to be available to consumers by the end of 2013. After doing all this research, I went to my kitchen, opened the refrigerator door,

looked at all the food in it, and said to my husband, Steven, “What the heck are we eating?!”

Not all markets offer certified organic and non-GMO products, but the day is coming when they will. If you can find, and if you can afford organic and non-GMO foods, then that is the best way to get the proper nourishment you need without causing or stirring up unwanted health problems.

We really need to get in touch with members of Congress and let them know how we feel about GMO foods. We, the People, have power. Yes, we do! This messing around with our food has to stop now before it gets to the point of no return.

In closing, I will leave you with this food for thought. You know, there is a funny segment in one of my favorite movies, *Christmas Vacation*, where Chevy Chase’s character, Clark, was asked to write up a report on a non-nutritive cereal “varnish” and to put it in laymen’s terms. It was basically this: “It’s a non-nutritive cereal varnish. It’s semi-permeable. It’s not osmotic. What it does is it coats and seals the flake and prevents the milk from penetrating it.” I think you get the point.

GO NO GMO!

References:

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