

# Critical consumers do often buy genetically modified food

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Many people disapprove of genetically modified food. You would therefore expect them to avoid these products in supermarkets. Dutch researchers at TU Delft have revealed that by no means all European consumers put that theory into practice.

## Actual buying behaviour

Over the past decade, countless polls have been held to research whether consumers would buy [genetically modified](#) (GM) products. The compulsory labelling of GM products enabled researchers from the

Biotechnology and Society research group to monitor the actual buying behaviour of consumers. This research was conducted in the following European countries: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

## **Bought after all**

Only 30 percent of the consumers questioned said that they avoided buying GM products, but 1 in 4 of them had nevertheless bought a GM product. Of all the consumers who had bought products with a GM label, nearly half thought they had not, twenty percent thought they had, and thirty percent didn't know. This indicates that some consumers do not read the label (although nearly 80% said they knew that GM products must be labelled), or that they don't really care whether or not they buy GM products.

## **Issue?**

The research shows that what people say about GM food does not provide a reliable enough basis for policy making because, in practice, [consumers](#) often behave very differently. It also suggests that avoiding GM food is perhaps not such an issue after all.

The researchers have published their findings in an article in *GM Food & Crops*.

**More information:** [www.landesbioscience.com/journal/2013/GMC0015.pdf](http://www.landesbioscience.com/journal/2013/GMC0015.pdf)

Provided by Delft University of Technology

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