

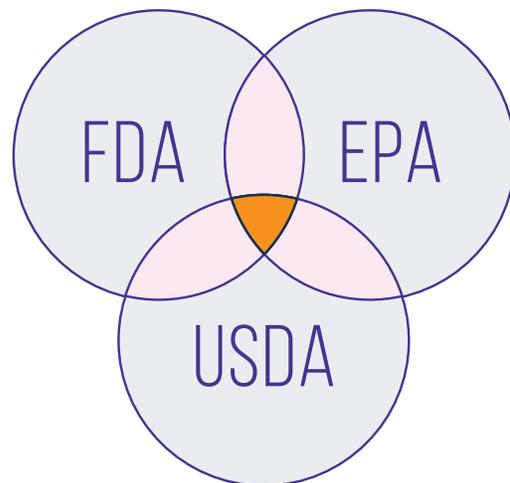
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# HOW GMOs ARE REGULATED IN THE UNITED STATES

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Three federal agencies within the U.S. government work together to regulate most GMOs. “GMO” (genetically modified organism) has become the common term consumers and popular media use to describe a plant, animal, or microorganism that has had its genetic material (DNA) altered through a process called genetic engineering. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) ensure that GMOs are safe for human, plant, and animal health. These agencies also monitor the impact of GMOs on the environment.

The [Coordinated Framework for the Regulation of Biotechnology](#),<sup>1</sup> established in 1986, describes how the agencies work together to regulate GMOs.



## U.S. Food and Drug Administration

FDA regulates most human and animal food, including GMO foods. In doing so, FDA makes sure that foods that are GMOs or have GMO ingredients meet the same strict safety standards as all other foods. FDA sets and enforces food safety standards that those who produce, process, store, ship, or sell food must follow, no matter how the foods are created.

## U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

[EPA](#)<sup>2</sup> is responsible for protecting human health and the environment, which includes regulating pesticides. EPA regulates the safety of the substances that protect GMO plants, referred to as [plant-incorporated protectants \(PIPs\)](#)<sup>3</sup> that are in some GMO plants to make them resistant to insects and disease. EPA also monitors all other types of pesticides that are used on crops, including on GMO and non-GMO crops.

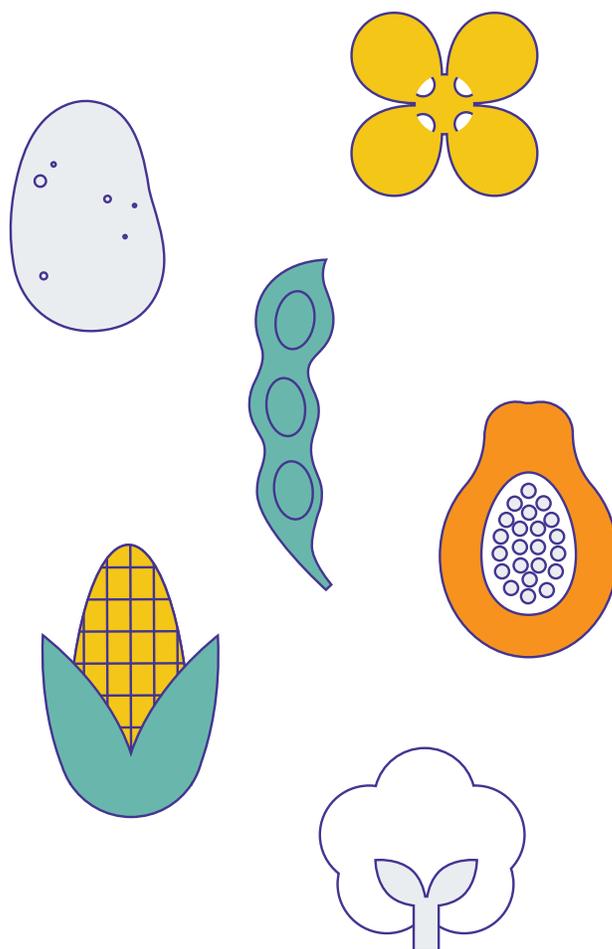
## U.S. Department of Agriculture

The [USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(APHIS\)](#)<sup>4</sup> protects agriculture in the United States against pests and disease. APHIS sets regulations to make sure GMO plants are not harmful to other plants, and USDA's [Biotechnology Regulatory Services](#)<sup>5</sup> implements these regulations.

## Ensuring GMOs are safe

Multiple federal agencies within the U.S. government work to regulate GMOs. FDA works with EPA and USDA to ensure that GMOs are safe for people and for the environment. These agencies also monitor the impact of GMOs on the environment. Collaboration and coordination among these agencies help make sure food developers understand the rules they need to follow when creating new plants through genetic engineering.

FDA's voluntary [Plant Biotechnology Consultation Program](#)<sup>6</sup> evaluates the safety of food from new GMOs before they enter the market. This program allows developers to work with FDA on a product-by-product basis.





## How the Plant Biotechnology Consultation Program works

The Plant Biotechnology Consultation Program is a voluntary program with four key steps:

- GMO plant developer meets with FDA about a potential new product for use in human and animal food.
- GMO developer submits food safety assessment data and information to FDA.
- FDA evaluates the data and information and resolves any issues with the developer.
- Consultation is complete once FDA has no more questions about the safety of the human and animal food made from the new GMO plant variety. Completed consultations are all [made public](#).<sup>7</sup>

## How to tell if you are eating GMOs

Certain types of genetically engineered foods have a disclosure that lets you know if the food is bioengineered. The [National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard](#)<sup>8</sup> defines [bioengineered foods](#)<sup>9</sup> as those that contain detectable genetic material that has been modified through certain lab techniques and cannot be created through conventional breeding or found in nature.

For more information visit [www.ams.usda.gov/be](http://www.ams.usda.gov/be).



Get more information about GMOs at [www.fda.gov/feedyourmind](http://www.fda.gov/feedyourmind).



## Sources:

<sup>1</sup><https://www.usda.gov/topics/biotechnology/how-federal-government-regulates-biotech-plants>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.epa.gov>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.epa.gov/regulation-biotechnology-under-tsca-and-fifra/overview-plant-incorporated-protectants>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/home>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/biotechnology>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.fda.gov/food/food-new-plant-varieties/new-plant-variety-regulatory-information>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.fda.gov/food/consultation-programs-food-new-plant-varieties/final-biotechnology-consultations>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/be>

<sup>9</sup><https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/be/bioengineered-foods-list>