



*Healthy Plants • Healthy World*

March 18, 2002

The American Phytopathological Society (APS) supports the right of customers to choose the products they buy from your stores and other food stores. The APS is a professional scientific organization of 5,000 members dedicated to the study and management of plant diseases.

We are aware of the efforts of certain organizations opposed to food products enhanced by biotechnology to pressure you and your stores to discontinue the sale of such products. Such a response would greatly reduce product choices for your customers. We, as scientists, are interested in the safety of food products and the right of the customer to have choices in the market place.

The biotechnology-enhanced products currently on the market have met and exceeded safety standards required by the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Department of Agriculture. We believe these products are as safe or safer than other existing products available to the public.

The current and future benefits of biotechnology are numerous and include the improvement of the availability, quality, and nutritional value of food. Based on scientific evidence, these products present the same or lower risk to consumers as products that have been produced by other production systems. Before new products are allowed onto the market place, numerous research trials have been completed and results of such trials are submitted to the federal agencies for review and approval.

We are not aware of scientifically documented instances of illness or adverse health effects of biotechnology-enhanced products in the market place. We suggest you ask those who make such claims to provide the evidence. We are aware of nonscientific and hypothetical statements made by those opposed to the technology, and are willing, at your request, to respond to such claims.

In short, we believe that biotechnology will lead the way to new, improved and healthier foods, and that the ultimate choice should be that of the consumer. As originators of some of these foods, we are pleased to purchase and consume these products.

Enclosed is information about APS and a statement that the society made on biotechnology. We would be pleased to discuss this matter with you further.

Sincerely,

Noel Keen, Ph.D.  
President, American Phytopathological Society

Enclosures