

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS - POTENTIAL DANGERS

The chemical giant Monsanto is clear in its statements – “There is no danger from genetically modified (GM) foods.” Companies frequently issue statements reassuring the public (you & me) that food products that contain a number of ingredients that have been derived from genetically modified products are perfectly safe. Occasionally we may hear or read of some alleged danger that GM products may present. - Can there be a definitive ‘Safe’ or ‘Unsafe’ answer. Big Pharma and Big Ag are likely to declare their products utterly safe but it is obvious that Agriculture and the chemical giants are in need the most stringent of controls where genetic modification of food organisms is concerned.

The Monsanto website (and others) are positive, “So long as the introduced protein is deemed to be safe, food from GM crops determined to be substantially equivalent, (presumably equivalent or similar to the original protein) it is not expected to pose any health risks.

When Watson and Crick determined the structure of DNA the functions of the genes appeared as a simple logical mechanism. DNA was considered to be totally responsible for transcribing genes. RNA was thought to be just a messenger in the process and indeed was named messenger RNA

NATURE IS SELDOM SO SIMPLE. It is now known that RNA can store information AND use it to change DNA in a process now called reverse transcription. Reverse transcription has proved to be an important factor in human health, viruses have been changed and their disease causing powers nullified by the process,

Perhaps we should reconsider Monsanto’s website statement again – How is ‘safe’ determined? What does “substantially equivalent” actually mean? and what if the “unexpected health risks” actually do arise?

In 2012 Chinese scientists published research findings in the publication “Cell Research” that revealed that pieces of RNA from GM rice were found in humans who had eaten rice. Importantly they also revealed that the rice RNA was binding to molecular receptors in the liver cells preventing the formation of cholesterol. Far from being a good result this cholesterol forms part of the myelin sheath that surrounds nerve fibres where it is important in helping to increase the speed of transmission of nerve impulses. Nerve fibres lacking in cholesterol found in the brain were thus inhibiting and slowing brain function.