

# California Food and Agriculture Report Card

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**T**his Center for Food Safety *California Food and Agriculture Report Card* is the first in a series of report cards on the sustainability of California's food system. Each Report Card provides a "state of the state" report on a particular issue, in addition to an analysis of state agencies, the state legislature, and food corporations, and their respective roles as they relate to food and agriculture issues in the state.

In recent years, genetic engineering (GE) has become a pivotal issue in California food and agriculture. During this time, the state has passed legislation and created regulations to prevent the commercialization of GE fish, and also delayed the approval of the first commercial planting of GE pharmaceutical rice. At the same time, counties such as Mendocino, Marin, and Trinity have taken matters into their own hands and passed voter initiatives to ban the planting of GE crops in their counties.

These landmark initiatives prompted the Center for Food Safety to select genetically engineered food and agriculture as the subject of this first Report Card. This Report Card provides background on the GE issue and evaluates state agencies, the state legislature, and food manufacturers on their performance in protecting California's citizens, farmers, and environment from the hazards of GE crops. It highlights the positive and negative contributions of these important players in the California food system in the context of larger trends, and provides recommendations to help each better meet the increasing challenges posed by the genetic engineering of our food supply.

In the coming years, the future of California agriculture will be decided as we move toward or away from genetically engineered food and agriculture. During this time it is critical that the state act responsibly and do everything in its power to ensure the health of California's farmers, consumers, and environment. We hope this Report Card lays the groundwork for these critical decisions.

ANDREW KIMBRELL  
*Executive Director*

REBECCA SPECTOR  
*West Coast Director*

### KEY STATISTICS from the State of the State of GE Food and Agriculture in California

There are an estimated  
750,000 acres of GE crops  
grown in California.

Corn and cotton are the  
leading commercial GE  
crops grown in the state.

The total number of GE  
field trial permits and  
notifications in California  
is 1203.

California ranks fourth  
among all states in number  
of GE field trials.

The most common crops  
used in GE field trials in  
California are tomato,  
corn, cotton, rice, alfalfa,  
and grapes.

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## SUMMARY OF GRADES

### CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE

#### Senate:

The Senate has introduced only 5 bills relating to GE foods and crops, 2 of which have been signed into law.

**C+**

#### Assembly:

The Assembly has introduced only 4 bills relating to GE foods and crops, 1 of which has been signed into law.

**D**

### CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCIES

#### Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA):

CDFA is not adequately providing oversight of GE field trials or commercialized GE crops, and is not protecting farmers from economic impacts of GE crops.

**D**

#### Department of Fish and Game (CDFG):

CDFG is adequately administering regulations for GE fish, but should commission studies of impact of GE on animals or endangered species.

**C**

#### California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA):

Cal/EPA is not adequately assessing the impacts of GE crops on food safety or non-target species; is not managing against pest resistance; is not tracking expanded herbicide use.

**F**

#### Department of Health Services (CDHS):

CDHS is not adequately conducting risk assessments of GE crops; is not educating the public about the potential human health risks of GE foods; is not conducting stakeholder meetings.

**D**

### FOOD CORPORATIONS

#### Food retailers:

Three major retailers in the state source non-GE ingredients in their store brand products while three others do not.

**C**

#### Natural and Organic Companies:

All six food companies evaluated have made commitments toward making sure their products are sourced with non-GE ingredients.

**A**

#### Top Conventional Food Manufacturers:

Most of these companies do not have policies against the use of GE organisms in their food products and do not require that their store brand products be sourced with non-GE ingredients.

**D-**