



October 2007

## **Position Statement on Genetically Modified Organisms**

### **United's Commitment to Sustainability**

United Natural Foods, like many other companies in the natural products industry, was founded by people who shared a vision of people in a harmonious relationship with nature.

Today that vision encompasses sustainability for our planet, our communities, our customers, our suppliers and for the natural and organic products industry as a whole.

We believe that the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and their inclusion in our food supply pose a serious threat to human and animal health and to the environment and is therefore fundamentally contrary to our vision of a sustainable future.

### **Definition of Genetically Modified Organism**

We define GMOs according to the 1996 Organic Trade Association definition of Genetically Modified Organisms as those "... made with techniques that alter the molecular or cell biology of an organism by means that are not possible under natural conditions or processes." As such, GMOs may contain substances that have never been part of the human food supply.

### **Concerns about GM Crops and Agriculture**

The governments of the United States and Canada have approved GMO crops for commercial use based on safety studies conducted by the same companies who developed the organisms. In 30 other countries around the world, including Australia, Japan and all the countries of the European Union, GMOs are not considered to be safe and are therefore significantly restricted or banned outright.

Concerns about the health and environmental impacts of GM foods are growing, and include concerns about food allergies, the increased application of pesticides on GMO crops, the possible creation of "Super" weeds or diseases that do not respond to current countermeasures and may devastate future crops, and the impact on ecosystems including insects and neighboring crops.

Additionally, the insertion of animal genes into plants creates serious issues for consumers who follow ethnic and religious traditions, such as Kosher laws.

## **Position Statement**

United Natural Foods strongly and unequivocally supports Sustainable Agriculture and Organic Farming, and is therefore significantly concerned about the proliferation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in foods. Based upon the dangers, known and unknown, presented by GMOs, United Natural Foods has taken the following position:

- We support a moratorium on the use of GMO's until in-depth research on their long-range consequences has been completed.
- We support the consumer's right to know and hold that all products containing GMO ingredient should be labeled as such.
- We support the establishment of GMO-free standards and a certification process.
- We support the Non-GMO Project and its efforts to protect consumers, organic standards and the environment by establishing an independent standard and process for verification of non-GMO status for agricultural products.
- We are committed to patiently and persistently working with our suppliers to determine what they can guarantee about the GMO status of their products, and to provide GMO-free products as much as possible.
- We support the education of consumers regarding the presence of genetically modified products in the nation's food supply. We provide financial and other support to selected regional and national organizations working to educate consumers about GMOs.