

GM food in Singapore safe

WE THANK Mr Steven Lo Chock Fei for his feedback ("Label GM food products"; May 29).

We assure the public that all genetically modified (GM) food commercially available in Singapore has undergone safety assessments by both the Singapore Genetic Modification Advisory Committee (GMAC) and the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA).

These assessments are based on the Codex Alimentarius Commission's principles established by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and the World Health Organisation.

There has been no substantiated scientific evidence to show that GM food is unsafe.

Like all other food products, GM food must meet prevailing AVA food safety labelling requirements on ingredient listing and information for consumers. Currently, companies can voluntarily label a food product as "GMO" or "non-GMO", provided this can be substantiated.

It is not international practice for GM food to be labelled as such.

Where practised, GM food labelling serves the purpose of providing consumers with choice, rather than for food safety reasons.

There are a number of factors to consider in reviewing the need to specify GM food.

One is the lack of an internationally agreed threshold level of genetic material in a food product to make labelling obligatory.

Singapore, like many other countries, is of the view that any labelling regime must be practical, scientifically derived and effectively implementable across countries.

AVA and GMAC are following ongoing global discussions on GM food closely and will implement measures in line with international best practices.

More information on GMAC and its guidelines on the safety evaluation of GM food crops are available at <http://www.gmac.gov.sg/>

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