



OUTLINE OF SEIKATSU CLUB



SCCU STATEMENT

March 14, 2000

Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative Union

STOP GMO!

Seikatsu Club Consumers Cooperative Union is of the opinion that the genetically modified organisms (GMOs) will pose numerous problems.

Firstly there will be an imbalance of our ecological system, which we are part of this system.

Introducing GMOs into this system which will only benefit mankind is sheer arrogance on our part.

Japan ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1993 and a United Nations sponsored meeting in Montreal in January 2000 adopted the Biosafety Protocol. Japan should ensure its firm position in enacting a global rule to curb GMOs with the cooperation of European Union and other developing countries.

The United States of America (USA) and the transnational companies (TNCs) like Monsanto are jointly marketing genetically modified agricultural commodities. The US acknowledges the fact that they hold the patents of the GMO and that they are the warehouse of these agricultural crops for world market. A number of TNCs are promoting the sales of the genetically modified seeds together with the agricultural materials. If they succeeded in penetrating the Japanese market -- the largest food importing country in the world --, this means great opportunities for their business. It also means that they are able to market the seeds to other Asian countries. Therefore the issue of GMOs is of critical importance to Japanese consumers as it concerns food.

As rice is the staple food of Japanese and if we are eating genetically modified rice, then safety assessment should also be conducted here. This is because it is the responsibility of each country and region to have its own safety assessment due to our different food habits. There is also the possibility that a new allergen be introduced through GMOs.

As there is no mandatory labelling on GMOs, consumers are unaware of what goes into the food they are buying or eating. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery of Japan (MAFF) released the

announcement of draft on mandatory labelling on GMOs. However its contents is insufficient to protect consumers.

The long-term impact and the comprehensive evidence of the safety are to be assured. Therefore even the very small quantity of additives and animal foods derived from genetically modified organism should be disclosed fully. This is to ensure that consumers are able to make a choice.

Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative Union stated firmly in 1997 that principally the genetically engineered foods and crops should be banned and that all foods item were reviewed taking the necessary precautions. From April 2000, Seikatsu Club will voluntarily label on all food items containing GMOs. Its aim is to create awareness on the issue and to present an alternative model of consumption and distribution in the WTO regime. With the cooperation of members and producers Seikatsu Club realizes that its policy statement to say no to genetically modified organism will be a reality in the international community.

Under the banner of "Global Standards", a dangerous and unpredictable organism is being marketed globally. There is no scientific evidence for its safety nor impact assessment on human health and the Environment. Through industrialization and development in technology man is able to improve its living standard. In this context, man should use this rationale to review the issue of GMOs so that it will not create harmful effects to mankind.

Taking into consideration the rationality of consumers and producers, Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative Union would like to say No and Stop to production and distribution of genetically modified foods and crops on the eve of the twenty first century. This statement will only be a reality if citizens from all over the world have a unanimous opinion on the issue of GMOs.

For more information on this matter, contact:

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Our challenge and goal

Koichi Kato, senior executive officer of SCCU

It was in January 1997 that Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative Union (SCCU) decided to take a

stand on genetically modified organism (GMO) as mentioned in our Statement .

SCCU realized that the use of biotechnology should be restrained from the viewpoint of food safety, public health and the environment. In addition, SCCU is concerned on the way seeds, method of agriculture and even food production are controlled by a few multinational companies.

However at the time when SCCU issued the statement, we did not have a clear direction on how we should tackle the problem. As we are a consumers' cooperative and practicing joint purchasing system, we are handling mostly essential goods and food products. We started to investigate how foods are processed and at the same time find out if any of the ingredients contain materials which are genetically modified. We could achieve this through the enthusiasm of our members and the cooperation of our producers. Without which, we will not be able to practice our principle concerning GMO as mentioned earlier.

As of March 1999, we are handling approximately 800 food items. Out of which 324 items were identified as likely to contain GMO. We decided to identify food items having more than 10 % raw materials containing GMO and eliminate it. We were left with 47 items out of the 324. Some of the items were taken off our food range, as there were no alternative available.

Based on our review of 277 items, we realized the possibility that these items could contain less than 10 % food ingredients of GMO origin. Presently, SCCU took the following actions on 159 food items. Following are the actions taken by SCCU:

- A) The raw materials for soy sauce and Miso (bean paste) are replaced as it is likely to contain GMO;
- B) Vinegar which are made from corn alcohol are replaced with alcohol made from rice and apples;
- C) Starch derived from corn is replaced with those made from sweet potatoes. There are still areas, which needed to be resolved, such as alcohol, lecithin produced by soybean, Vitamin E, citric acid and flavoring as less than 1% are added to food. It is difficult to find alternatives. We hope that there will be some new development in this aspect. We will be reviewing this matter from time to time.

Besides the above action taken on foods and food ingredients, we find that it is even more tedious when we had to review the ingredients in animal feed. As fresh milk, beef, pork, eggs and chicken are among our main food items, it is important the livestock concern are not fed with grains that are derived from GMO. As the self- sufficiency rate for the agricultural crops as animal feeds are tremendously low in Japan, the livestock farmer are obliged to rely on imports. This is a difficult but

an important task. Previously we were getting our corn supply from National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations where we stressed that the corn should be free from pesticides, but now we have requested then that the corn are GMO free.

To ensure that the soybean is free of GMO, we are now importing it from India. We are conducting research on soybean in order to ensure that it is of high quality as well. We have also taken the necessary steps to investigate the ingredients used in animal feed with the exception of the additives present.

Therefore we are now proud to say that with our high level of investigation and review for genetically modified foods and food ingredients, we are able to reduce as much as possible GMO among our supplies to members. We realized that the issue of bio engineered food is getting sophisticated due to strong lobbying by multinational companies. In view of this we will be watching closely and taking the necessary actions wherever possible. Among the actions, which we propose to take, is to educate our members, farmers and producers of the ill effects of GMO. At the same time, we will strengthen our self-sufficiency power with regards to crops which are prone to contain GMO. Citizens should exercise their rights in controlling farming practices and at the same time ensure that the seeds used are not protected under any intellectual property rights law. SCCU will take a firm stand and challenge the task.

SCCU STAND ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS AND FOODS



STATEMENT BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 21, 1997

Seikatsu Club Consumers' Cooperative Union

SCCU has the following principle concerning Genetically Modified Crops and Foods.

1. We do not deal in crops and foods that are produced by genetic modification. If we found out that our food products contained genetically modified organism, these will be labeled for easy identification by our members.
2. We called on the Japanese Government to pass a law on labeling of food that is produced by genetic modification. In this way consumers have the choice of either accepting or rejecting the genetically modified organism. The Government should inform consumers of the environmental impact and safety of genetically modified organism and its social and economic implication on food security. This information can be used as a future reference.

3. We disseminate the above information to our producers. In addition we also collaborate with other local and foreign organizations on the issue of the genetically modified organism.

Reasons behind SCCU Stand on Genetically Modified Crops and Foods:

1. In the advent of modern scientific technology, man is controlling and exploiting the Nature. It is in a matter of time that man will pay for the price of this scientific development. As in the case of the genetically modified organism (GMO) where gene manipulation is taking place, the effect of such practice could be disastrous. As such we should be more cautious on this matter.
2. Various factors will have to be considered in the case of GMO. For example genes which are natural are being manipulated in an unnatural way through genetic manipulation. Resulting in a product it will have a far-reaching consequence on environment and society. For one this product will be protected under the intellectual property rights and it will be marketed on profit making basis. Presently, a total impact analysis has not been carried out on GMO. We are opposing this technology as it is being promoted on a commercial basis.
3. There has not been a comprehensive study conducted on the safety of genetically modified food. For example, the question of safety arises when bio engineered livestock and crops are raised for specific economic purposes. The same applies in the case of genetically modified feed or veterinary drugs. Taking the case of cows treated with bovine growth hormone to increase the production of milk. The safety of the milk produced in this way has not been proven.