



United States Department of Agriculture
Foreign Agricultural Service



Labeling of Food Derived from Modern Biotechnology

Consumer product labeling

A horizontal banner spanning the width of the slide, featuring a landscape of rolling yellow hills under a blue sky with white clouds. The banner is divided into several vertical segments by thin white lines.

Purpose of food labeling

- Consumer information – food safety
- Consumer right to know – choice



If label – what, when, how?

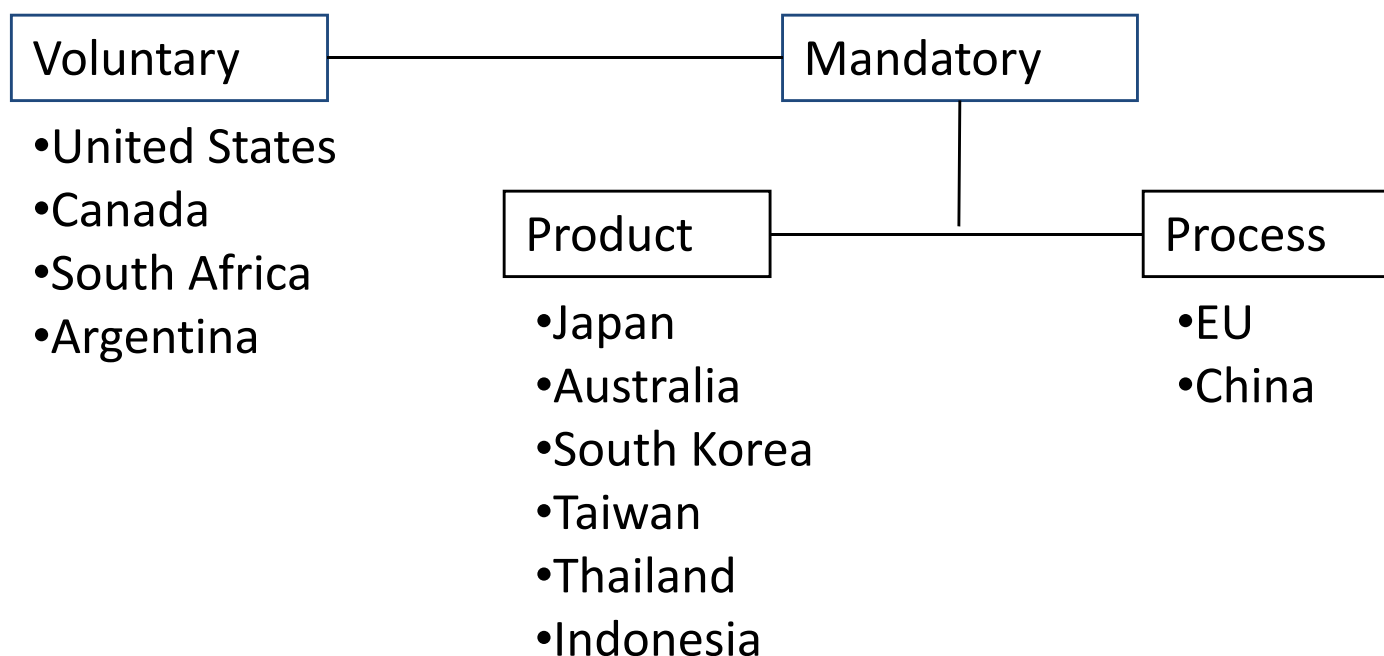
- All foods produced using gene technology?
- Only foods with detectable DNA or protein?
 - would not apply to highly processed products such as soy/corn oil, sugar, etc
- Would minor ingredients, processing aids, enzymes be included?
 - chymosin used in making cheese, & yeast used in fermentation of wine and beer,
- Animal Feed?
- Animal products derived from animals fed GE crops?



- When to Label?
 - Should a threshold trigger be set?
 - Depend on paper trail?
 - Detection methods: protein or DNA?
- Other considerations
 - Accidental comingling?
 - Liability for noncompliance?
 - Added cost for segregation/IP, testing, or extensive documentation?



Labeling regimes around the world



Other areas of differences:

- Threshold – trigger for label (0.9%, 1%, 5%,?)
- Scope – What is covered, what is exempted (food, feed, additives, meat and animal products, highly processed products, ability to detect transgene/protein)



U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

1992 FDA Statement of Policy: Foods Derived from New Plant Varieties

Same approach as labeling of conventional foods

- Labels must be truthful and not misleading
- Labeling criteria depend on:
 - Objective characteristics and intended use of the food
 - **Not** on method used to produce the food
- *Conditions for mandatory labeling**
 - Health or safety consideration, e.g., presence of new allergen
 - Significant difference in composition or nutritional content
 - Special need for storage, preparation, cooking, etc.

*label the material information, not the process



CODEX Committee on Food Labeling

- 2011 adopted “Compilation of Codex Texts Relevant to Labeling of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology”
- use of existing Codex texts that apply to all foods
- does not endorse existing labeling approaches
- clarifies that foods derived from modern biotechnology are not necessarily different from other foods simply due to their method of production



- US domestic labeling initiatives
 - State initiatives
 - Private Sector
 - Whole Foods