



GROUP

Insights Revealed

Survey Reveals Powerful Consumer Sentiments on Various Food Label Statements, Vermont GMO Labeling Mandate Most Disparaging

The large consumer survey, conducted by the MSR Group tested how consumers understood five common food label statements related to trans fat, allergens, gluten, organic, and genetically modified ingredients (GMOs). These five food label claims were tested to judge how the claim would impact perceptions about nutrition, healthfulness, taste, safety, and manufacturer's concern about the consumer. The influence the label would have on purchase intent was also tested. The survey was conducted from June 13-21, 2016 with 1,665 online survey participants evenly distributed across the four United States Census Regions, representing household primary grocery shoppers who passed standard screening to exclude those employed in industries such as advertising, marketing, food and beverage production, or policy-making which may have an immediate bias toward certain labels statements. Participants were recruited from a national survey panel.

Key takeaways of the survey include the following:

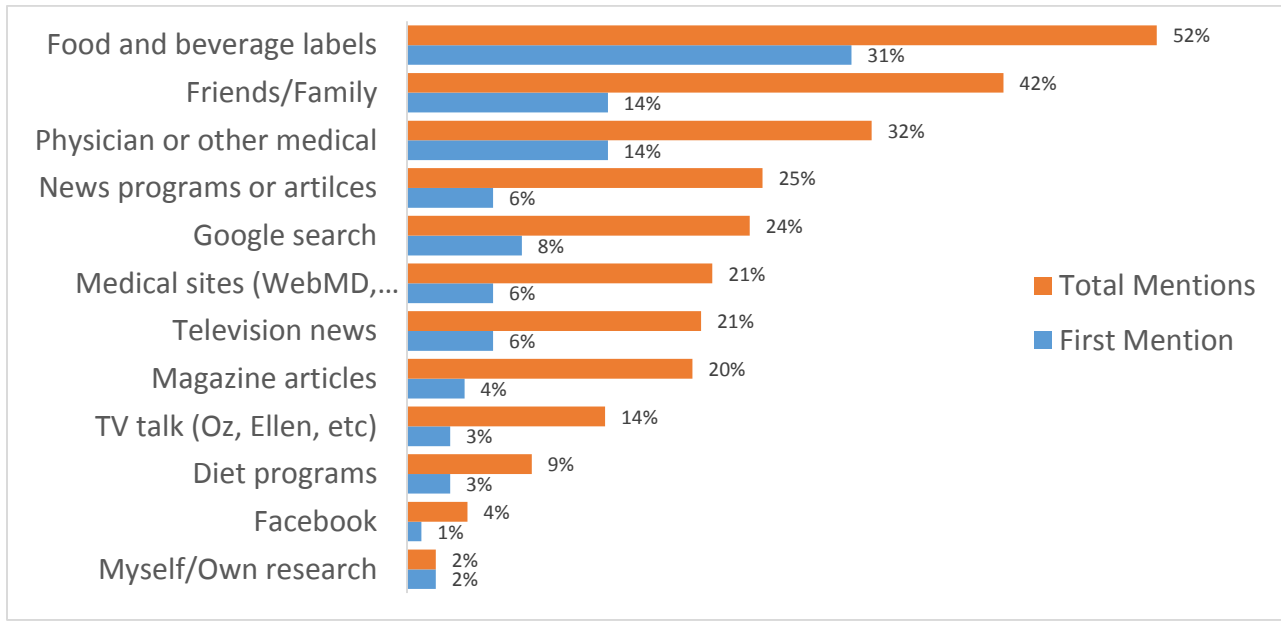
- Labels influence consumer purchase intent.
- Labels communicate healthfulness, nutrition, environmental impact, safety, and the care shown by the manufacturer to consumers.
- Age plays a large role in consumer sentiment towards label statements.
- The on-pack GMO label statements mandated by Vermont law, Act 120, strongly misled consumers. All three of the on-pack GMO labeling options allowed under Vermont law misled substantial percentages of consumers to wrongly perceive the labeled product as less safe, less healthful, less nutritious, and worse for the environment. The Vermont label requirements are so disparaging that approximately 73% of consumers indicated they would be less likely to buy foods bearing one of the required Vermont GMO label disclosures.

The survey questions and results are broken down into five sections and shown in the report below.

SECTION 1: INFORMATION SOURCES

Question: What source of information most influences your decisions and opinions when it comes to food and nutrition?

Information Sources

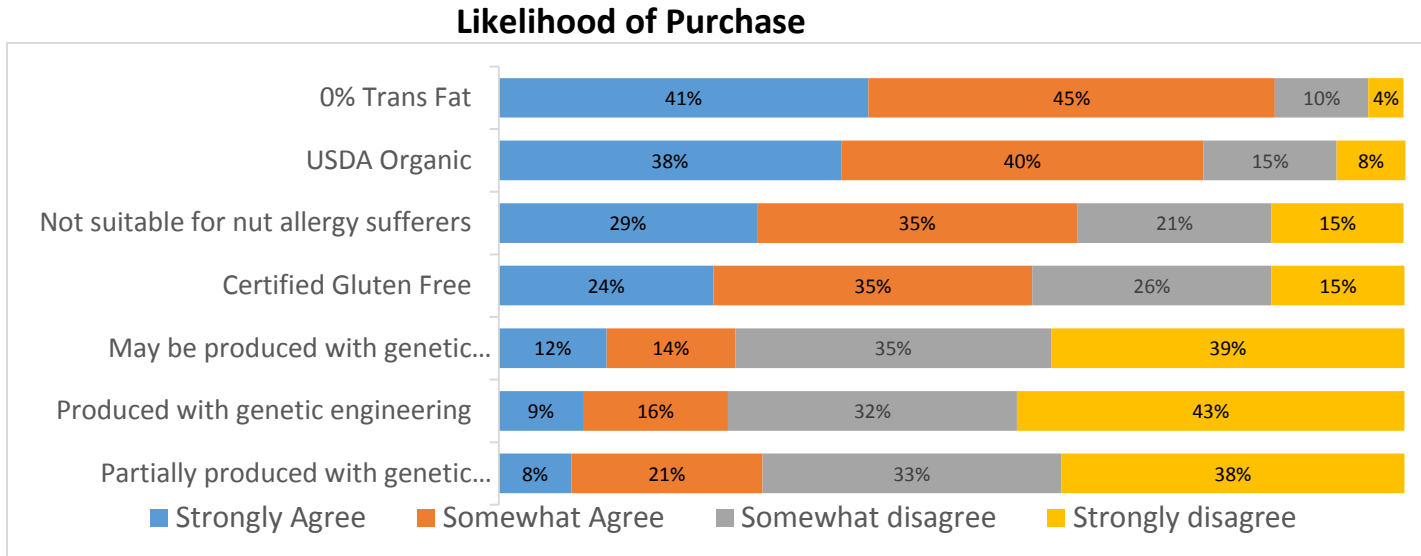


Top Takeaway:

- 52% mentioned food and beverage labels as a source of information that most influences purchase decisions, while 42% rely on friends and family and 32% rely on their physician.

SECTION 2: LIKLIHOOD OF PURCHASE

Question: Would you be more likely to buy a product with this label than one without?



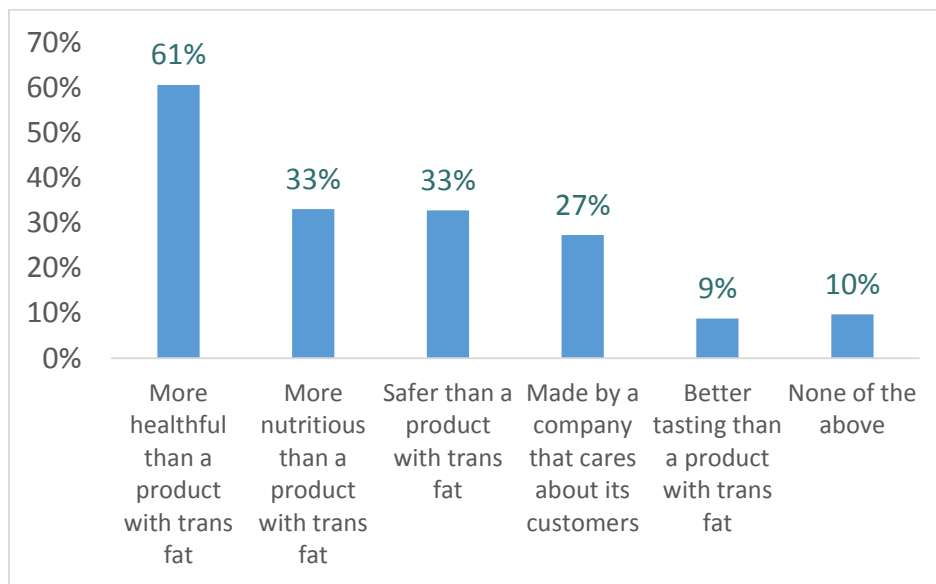
Top Takeaway:

- More than 80% say they would be more inclined to buy the “0 grams trans fat” labeled product compared to one without the label.
- Other labels see a similar uptick: USDA Organic, 78%; Nut allergy, 64%; Gluten Free, 59%.
- Approximately three-fourths, or 73% on average, of the respondents say they would choose another product rather than a Vermont labeled GMO item.
 - May be produced with genetic engineering, 74%
 - Produced with genetic engineering, 75%
 - Partially produced with genetic engineering, 71%

SECTION 3: CONSUMER SENTIMENT ON 5 FOOD LABEL CLAIMS

The following section asks consumers about their perceptions of five common food claims on labels such as the 0 Grams Trans Fat, Not Suitable for Nut Allergy Sufferers, Gluten Free, USDA Organic, and the on-pack GMO label mandated by Vermont. They were asked to judge how the claim would impact their perceptions about nutrition, healthfulness, taste, safety, and manufacturer's concern about the consumer.

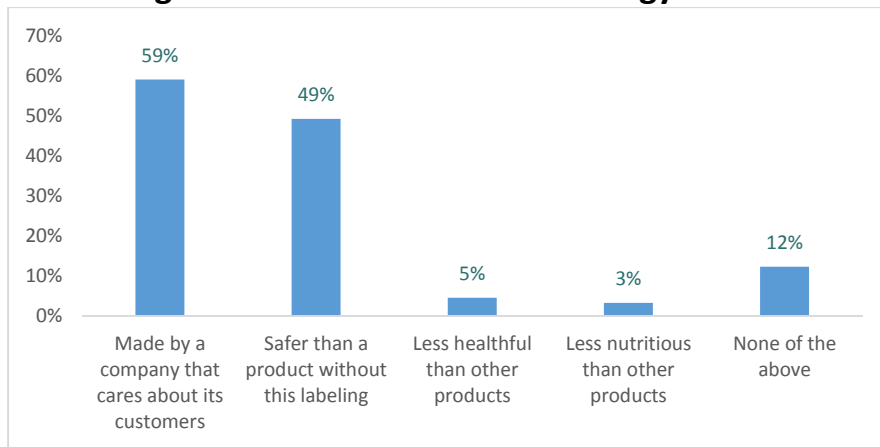
Chart A
0 Grams Trans Fat Label



Top Takaway:

- This is the only claim where the 54+ age groups were more positive about healthfulness of this product compared to younger, however. Those aged 54 years old and older were more likely to find it more nutritious.

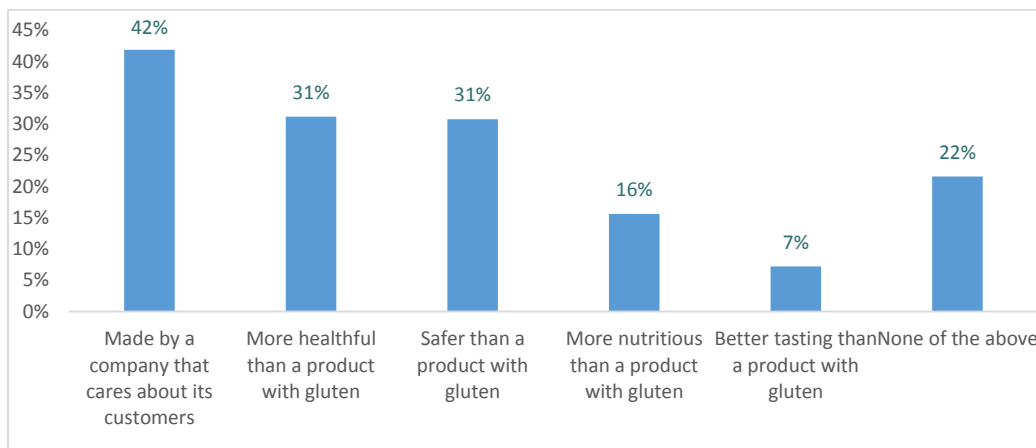
Chart B
Allergens- Not Suitable for Nut Allergy Sufferers Label



Top Takeaway:

- For this attribute, the 54+ age groups viewed this product as safer more often than younger respondents. Younger respondents (younger than 34 years old) were more likely to view this product as less nutritious and less healthful.

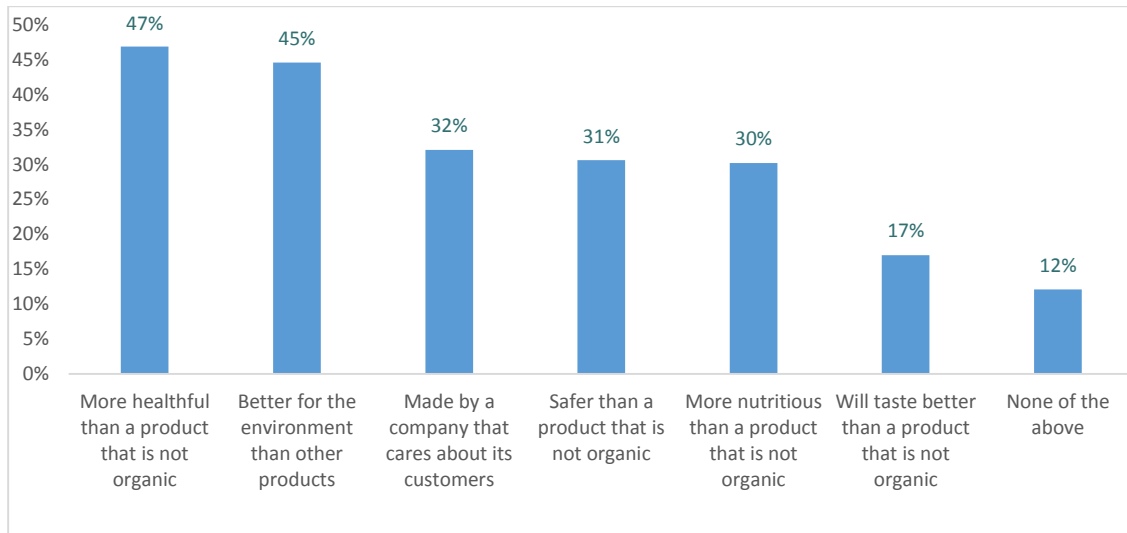
Chart C
Gluten Free Label



Top Takeaway:

- While 41% of the youngest respondents feel this product is more healthful, only 26% of the oldest group shares that opinion.
- Those 55+ are more likely to say “none of the above” compared to younger groups.

Chart D
USDA Organic Label



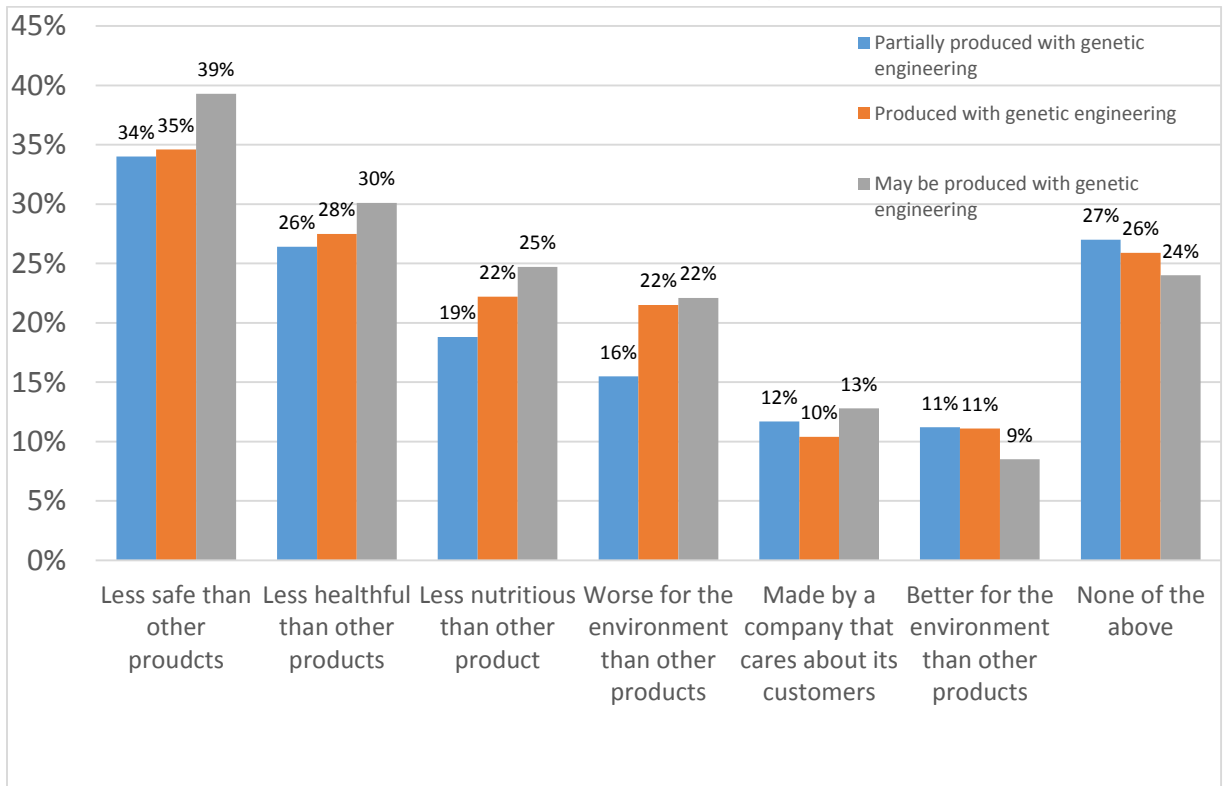
Top Takeaway:

- Organic received significantly higher scores in the younger age groups. The two most dramatic differences are noted above the nutrition and taste sections.

SECTION 4: VERMONT GENETIC ENGINEERING LABEL DISCLOSURE

Vermont’s Act 120 mandates on pack GMO disclosure on manufactured food and beverages produced with GMOs. The law allows for the following three disclosures to be listed on packages: 1.) “Partially produced with genetic engineering,” “Produced with genetic engineering” and “May be produced with genetic engineering.” These three Vermont options were used in the survey to test consumer perception toward the label as it relates to product safety, healthfulness, nutrition, environmental issues, and manufacturer’s concern about the consumer. The results are broken down by the following age groups: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 65+.

Chart E
Summary of Findings



Results Broken Down by Age

Question: A product with this label is...

Chart F

“Partially produced with genetic engineering”

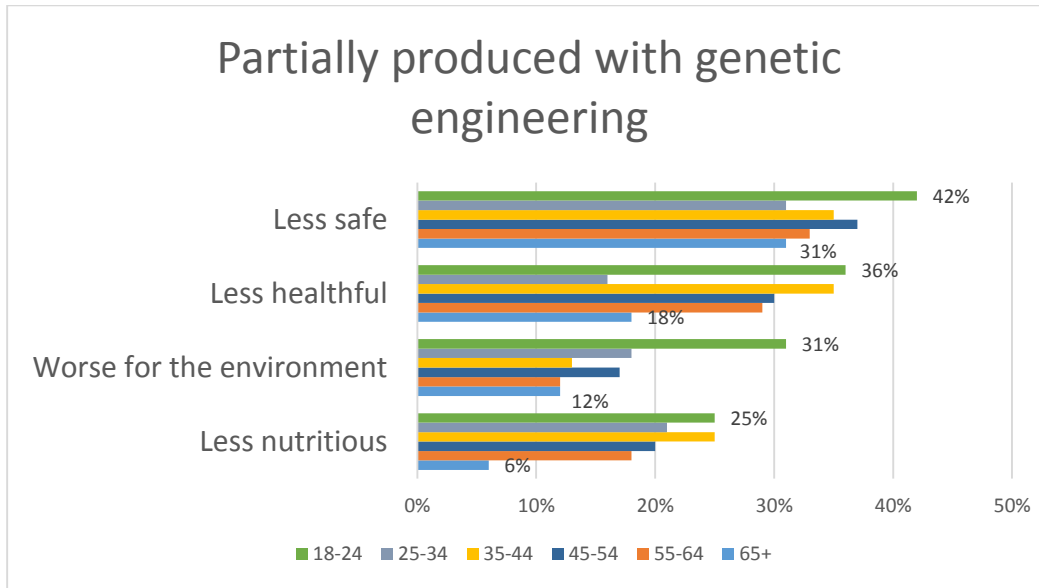


Chart G

“Produced with genetic engineering”

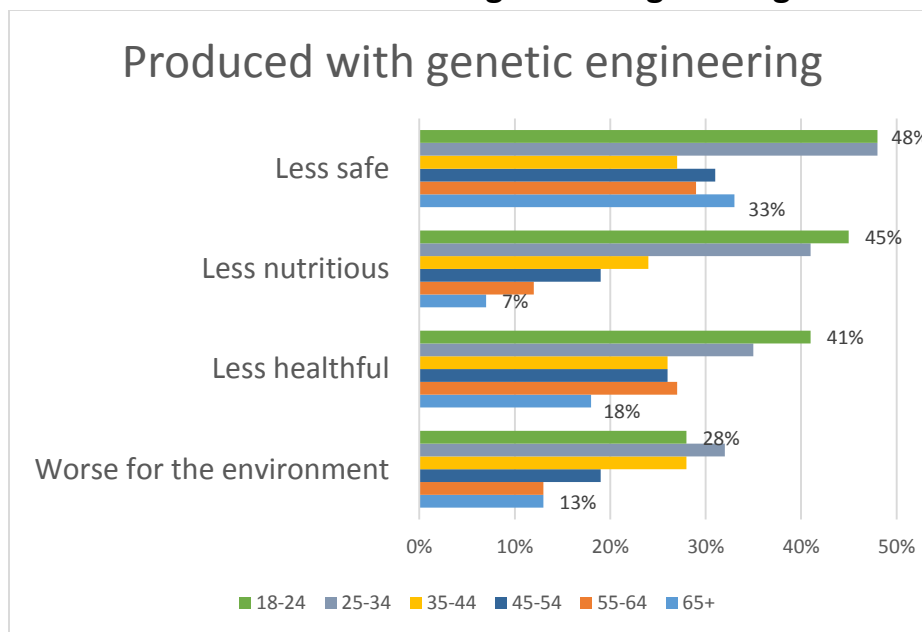
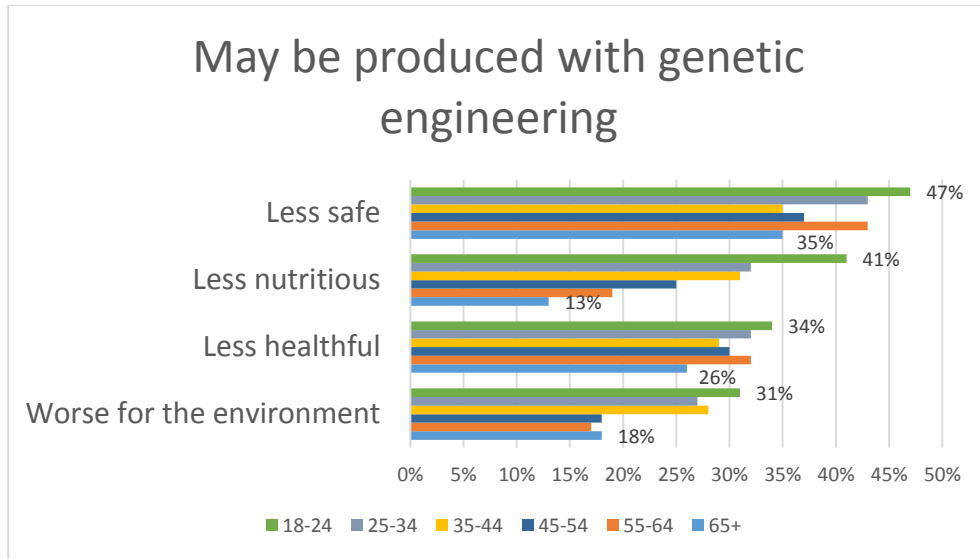


Chart H

“May be produced with genetic engineering”



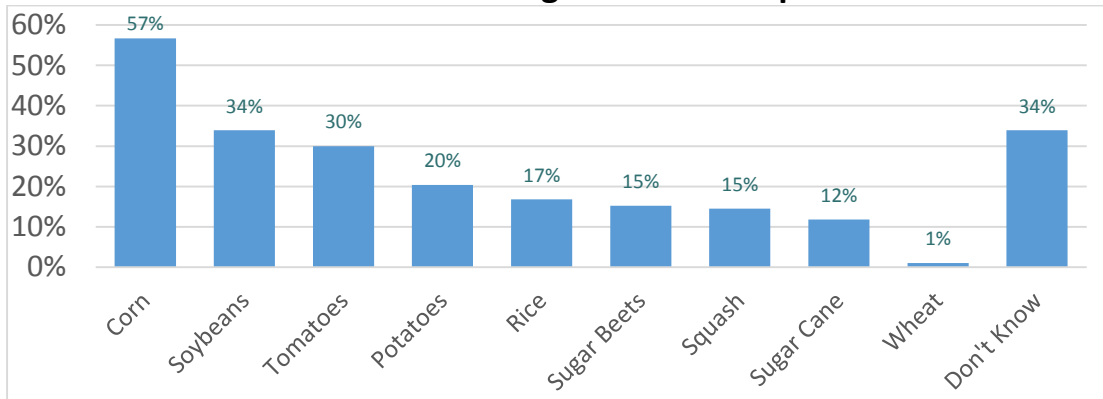
Top Takeaway:

- The Vermont GMO disclosure requirements are powerfully disparaging.
- Approximately three-fourths, or 73% on average, of the respondents say they would choose another product rather than a Vermont labeled GMO item.
- The Vermont mandated GMO label statements caused approximately:
 - 36% of consumers to incorrectly perceive the food to be “less safe.”
 - 28% of consumers to incorrectly perceive the food to be “less healthful.”
 - 22% of consumers to incorrectly perceive the food to be “less nutritious.”
 - 20% of consumers to incorrectly perceive the food to be “worse for the environment.”
- Of the three GMO statements, “partially produced with genetic engineering,” scored better than the other two options on all but one of the product attributes tested.

SECTION 5: CONSUMER SENTIMENT TOWARD GMO CROPS

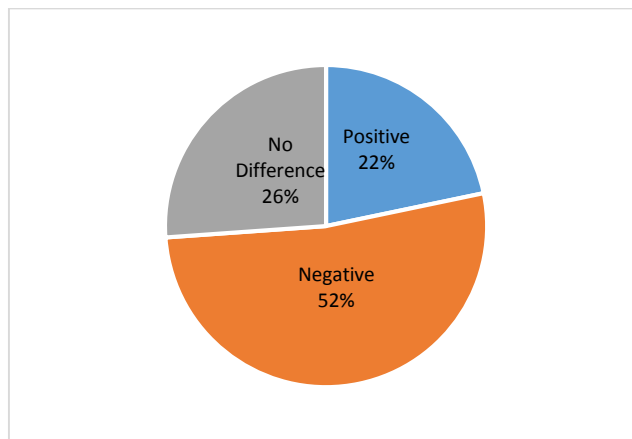
Question: To the best of your knowledge, what crops in the United States are grown from genetically modified seeds? [Combined Mentions]

Chart I
Knowledge on GMO Crops



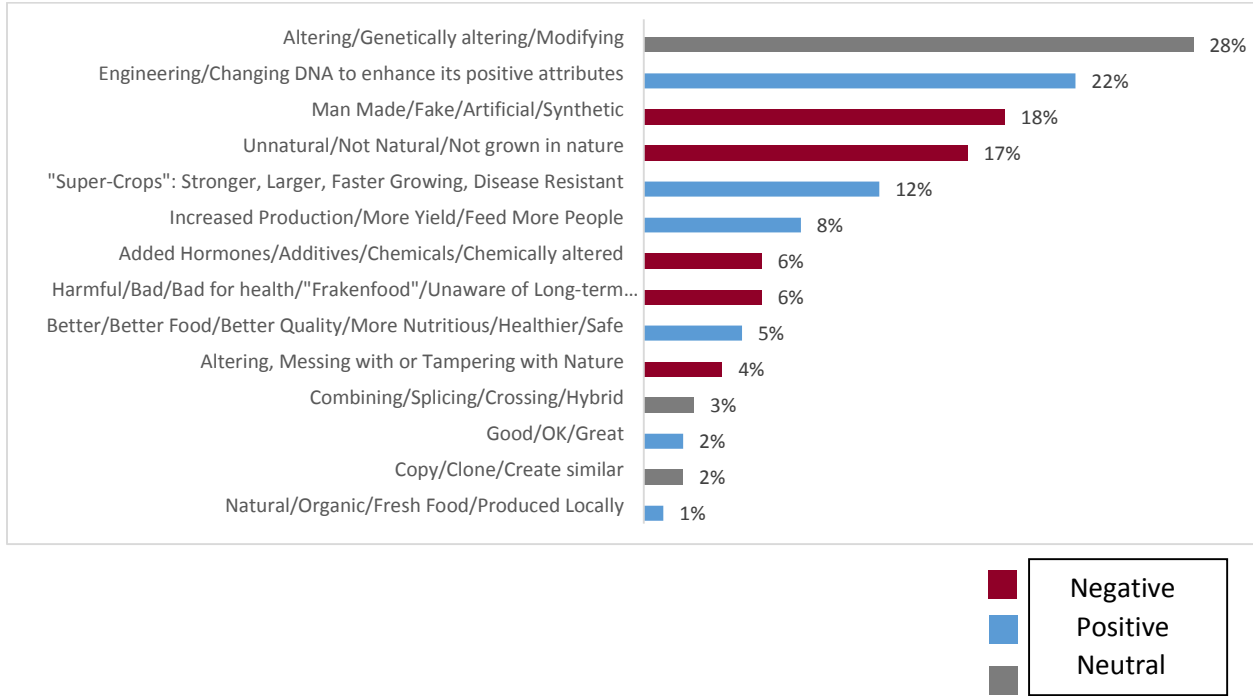
Question: In your opinion, is the use of genetic engineering of crops used to make foods and beverages positive, negative or does it make no difference?

Chart J
Sentiment on GMO Crops



Question: In your own words, what does genetic engineering mean? (Combined Mentions)

Chart K
GMO Meaning



Top Takeaway:

- Consumers negatively perceive GMOs.
- 51% of respondents stated a negative definition of genetic engineering when asked what it meant in their own words.
- 52% believe the use of GMO crops in food and beverages is negative.

This survey was sponsored by the American Soybean Association, Corn Refiners Association, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Grain and Feed Association, and SNAC International.