Lycée Privé Jeanne d’Arc School Year: 2014-2015

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Text: Genetically Modified Organisms

GMOs are plants or seeds created by borrowing a genetic code from a plant or an animal. Some modified seeds can produce their own pesticides; other can resist herbicides and pests or kill bugs. Some give an improved crop but are sterile. GM seeds are used throughout North and South America, China and Australia. In Europe planting, importing or selling GM seeds or foods has virtually stopped. Farmers will not plant the seeds, consumers will not buy the foods and stores decline to stock them, arguing that not enough research has been made on the food’s long-term safety.

Friends of the Earth Europe commissioned laboratory tests on 31 products, including tortilla chips; taco shells, polenta and corn flakes, and found that PhileasFogg Authentic Tortilla Chips and house-brand tortilla chips sold by grocers Safeway and Asda contained Monsanto’s Roundup Ready corn (GA21). KimsZapatasTM, purchased in Denmark, also tested positive for the presence of GA21. The concern is that the corn which contains DNA from bacteria, rice, and sunflower, could provoke allergic reactions.

The issue of genetically engineered food is not new to McDonalds. A Consumer Reports magazine article last September found that McDonalds’ veggie burgers tested positive for genetically-engineered soy content. Recent newspaper articles have confirmed that McDonalds has asked its major potato supplier in the US to grow non-genetically-engineered potatoes for its famous French fries, and McDonalds Europe has pledged to work actively with its suppliers to find non-GE sources of ingredients. Yet McDonalds have not committed to keeping genetically-engineered milk out of milkshakes, soy out of burgers, or corn sweetener out of soft drinks.

Other food companies and supermarkets, including Whole Foods, Gerber, Heinz, Seagram’s and Frito-Lay, have all taken steps to remove GE ingredients from their product lines.

Vocabulary:

Bug: virus, microbe

Tortilla chip: gâteau fait de la farine du maïs ou du blé

Taco : gâteau fait de viande et du haricot

Shell : coquille

Polenta : couscous fait de maïs