

## October Newsletter 2022

Hello Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to our monthly newsletter! This month's features are:

- The Market Corner article **A Market Update on Labeling of Bioengineered (BE) and Genetically Modified (GM) Foods in the United States** by Jane Kolodinsky, C-FARE Board Member.
- This month's Op-Ed features C-FARE Board Chair, Gal Hochman with the article **The Post-Pandemic Inflation, Supply chain Disruptions, and Businesses**
- New Direction features articles and papers titled:
  - [Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Food Pantry Use and Barriers in Massachusetts during the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
  - [Understanding Micro-pantries as an Emergency Food Source During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
  - [Report on USDA's Actions on Nutrition Security](#)

Keep reading to learn more,

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### Market Corner

#### **A Market Update on Labeling of Bioengineered (BE) and Genetically Modified (GM) Foods in the United States**

The National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Law (NBFDS) was passed by Congress in July of 2016 and the Standard was announced on December 20, 2018. The implementation date for all foods requiring the label was January 1, 2021. Bioengineered (BE) foods are more commonly known as GE, GM, or GMO but these are not equivalent under the labeling Standard. The Standard defined bioengineered foods as those that contain detectable genetic material that has been modified through certain lab techniques and cannot be created through conventional breeding or found in nature. GM and GMO foods are a much broader category of foods that include BE foods.

In 2015 and updated in 2019, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued guidance on the voluntary labeling of foods not derived from GM plants. A voluntary label is permitted on foods that are derived from Bioengineering. These foods contain no detectable bioengineered material. Separate for guidance has been developed for GM Atlantic salmon.

Here we are at the end of 2022, the first full year of mandatory labeling. Here are some updates.

1. There is no information on how many foods carry the BE mandatory or voluntary label. That said, there is a list of foods that must carry the label if a product contains more than 5 percent of the ingredient: alfalfa, apple (Arctic™ varieties), canola, corn, eggplant (BARI Bt Begun

varieties), papaya (ringspot virus-resistant varieties), pineapple (pink flesh varieties), potato, salmon (AquAdvantage®), soybean, squash (summer), and sugar beet. This list will be updated periodically.

2. More than 60,000 products carry the voluntary Non-GMO Project label. These products go through a certification process. Non-GMO project products do not contain any of the BE ingredients listed above. In addition, they do not contain ingredients derived from genetic engineering.

3. The definition of BE/GM differs for the “contains” mandatory label and the “does not contain” voluntary label.

4. A new purple tomato was approved in October, 2022. This tomato is genetically modified by placing two genes from snapdragons into tomato plants, which increase the concentration of anthocyanins associated with a number of health benefits. While news releases call these GM, they are not BE under the bioengineered standard and will not require mandatory labels. As the tomatoes do contain a possible health benefit, the little used voluntary BE disclosure may be employed as these tomatoes hit the retail shelves.

5. There are several disclosure options for BE foods: text, symbol, electronic or digital link, and/or text message. Additional options such as a phone number or web address are available to small food manufacturers or for small and very small packages. In September, 2022, a U.S. District Court ruled that the QR codes are unlawful, and that USDA must instead add additional disclosure options to those foods.

For up to date information on mandatory BE disclosures and the largest voluntary non GMO labeling certifier see <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/be> and <https://www.nongmoproject.org/>

**Jane Kolodinsky, C-FARE Board Member, University of Vermont**

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## **Op-ED**

### **The Post-Pandemic Inflation, Supply chain Disruptions, and Businesses**

The consumer price index, an index measuring the overall change in the price of a basket of goods and services, rose by 7.1% during the twelve months leading to January 2022. Since then, inflation increased further reaching higher levels in the following months. The spike in energy prices led Yara, a Norwegian fertilizer leader, to limit operations at two of its facilities due to the price of natural gas. The double-digit increase of agricultural commodity prices led to many food and beverage companies to face huge increases in costs, with the increase in wages only further fueling the rise in food prices. So to contain inflation, central banks increase interest rates to dampen demand. Since the pandemic, interest rates increased at historical rates, with the latest interest-rate hike in the US increasing by 0.75-percentage-points on November 2nd.

Besides, the pandemic also caused consumption to shift from services to manufacturing goods. IMF traces, globally, up to 40 percent of the supply constraints in manufacturing to shutdowns, suggesting only transient effects of supply chain disruptions on inflation. Similarly, severe weather hindered microchip and auto output in 2021. Other factors leading to supply constraints, labor shortages and aging infrastructure, may however yield more persistent effects on supply and inflation than shutdowns.

Regulatory measures should target supply bottlenecks directly, when possible, alleviating labor shortages and streamlining the flow of products. Fiscal measures should also be deployed actively, albeit should be well targeted to prevent becoming an inflationary source. Although it is important to preserve jobs over the long-run, for example protecting and expanding the skills-intensive manufacturing jobs that are affected by intermediate input shortages. It is also essential to remove obstacles to work and educating workers in newly needed skills. As these measures become more successful in alleviating supply bottlenecks, the lesser will the need of central banks to mitigate demand and economic growth to keep inflation under control.

Nevertheless, the likeliness of prolonged supply bottlenecks challenges monetary authorities: How to sustain a recovery and ensuring output catches up with its pre-pandemic trend, while not allowing wages and prices to spiral upward out of control. It is crucial to secure sufficiently low stable inflation expectations, including those caused from supply disruptions and surging energy and food prices.

Never let a crisis go to waste! Business and companies respond to this crisis, in innovative and creative ways. Although the current uncertainty is unprecedented, we observe throughout the existing supply chains changes, targeted at making supply more resilient and less vulnerable to price fluctuations. For example, retailers globally refuse to increase prices and meet the price of imports. Instead, businesses introduce in-house alternatives and refuse to sell imported products at a premium. Business leaders, globally, are changing the contractual environment, making their supply chains more resilient to price uncertainty.

**Gal Hochman, C-FARE Board Chair, Rutgers University**

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## ICYMI

- **SAVE THE DATE.** C-FARE is hosting the 2023 Brandt Forum on **Agricultural and Environmental Science-Based Policy: Opportunities and Challenges For U.S. Agriculture and the Environment** on January 5, 2023 from 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. ET. Registration details to come soon!
- C-FARE hosted a webinar entitled “Building the Capacity to Invest in Rural Prosperity through Cross-sector Collaboration”. Check out our [website](#) and [YouTube](#) for a recap.
- In case you missed it, the recording of C-FARE’s Brandt Forum on “Agricultural And Environmental Science-Based Policy” is now available on our [website](#) and through this [replay](#).

- Check out our fourth episode of C-FARE’s podcast [Get a Grip with FARE](#) featuring Peyton Ferrier and Steve Neff from the USDA Economists Group.
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## New Directions

- **Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Food Pantry Use and Barriers in Massachusetts during the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic.** This study sought to describe racial disparities in food insecurity, food pantry use, and barriers to and experiences with food pantries during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic by surveying 2928 adults in Massachusetts regarding food access in the year before and during the first year of the pandemic. Weighted multivariable logistic regression models assessed racial differences in barriers to and experiences with pantry use during the pandemic. [Learn More Here.](#)
- **Understanding Micro-pantries as an Emergency Food Source During the COVID-19 Pandemic.** Micro-pantry users had increased their use of both micro-pantries and regular [food pantries](#) during the pandemic. Micro-pantries helped stretch resources. Users appreciated the anonymity and choice; the mutual aid aspects reduced stigma. Stakeholders described micro-pantries as providing a direct way for neighbors to help neighbors during the pandemic. [Read More Here.](#)
- **Report on USDA’s Actions on Nutrition Security.** This report summarizes how the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is leveraging its existing authorities, resources, and touchpoints to support nutrition security with a primary focus on activities from the USDA Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Mission Area. [Read More Here.](#)