

PFI Statement re: GMO National Voluntary Labeling Standard

2/19/16

The Pet Food Institute (PFI) thanks Senator Pat Roberts, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, for his proposal to establish a national voluntary labeling standard for food containing genetically modified ingredients. In light of the upcoming July implementation date of a mandatory on-package labeling law in Vermont, along with multiple other proposed state and local laws governing the cultivation and labeling of food produced using biotechnology, consumers face a patchwork regulatory process that would confuse and mislead. This disparate process also stands to increase costs to food products, including pet food. A nationwide labeling standard ensures that food producers can operate under a predictable regulatory system, while consumers are free to make educated and informed decisions and keep food costs low.

PFI believes that biotechnology is a critical tool in the effort to meet the daunting challenge of producing sufficient food for a growing global population in a manner that is environmentally sustainable. Multiple studies have shown that the associated costs with Vermont's GMO-labeling law and a subsequent collection of state laws will cost American families hundreds of dollars more in groceries each year. This increased cost also has the potential to impact pet lovers who are buying food for their cat or dog, including elderly citizens on fixed incomes and citizens who rely on service animals. This would also have a disproportionately negative impact on families with larger dogs who tend to eat more pet food.

PFI thanks Chairman Roberts for his leadership on this issue and looks forward to continued constructive dialogue to ensure that U.S. laws and policies governing biotechnology, along with all other aspect of pet food, are based on science and common sense.