



AS YOU SOW

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## **Investors Ask Abbott Labs to Take GMOs Out of Similac Baby Formula**

Abbott Laboratories, one of the world's top ten pharmaceutical and nutritional product companies, is using genetically modified corn and soy in its popular Similac infant formula and investors don't like it.

At Abbott's annual meeting this Friday, shareholders will vote on a [resolution](#) asking the company to remove genetically modified organisms (GMOs) from its nutritional products, including Similac infant formula, until long-term safety testing proves GMOs are safe. The resolution was filed by [As You Sow](#), a nonprofit organization that promotes corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy.

"Removing GMOs from nutritional products like infant formula can only benefit Abbott," says Andrew Behar, CEO of As You Sow. "As new and credible scientific concerns are raised, consumers are demanding to be given a choice in what foods they eat and feed their families. Abbott has an opportunity to lead the industry in being proactive on this important issue," Behar continued.

The use of GMOs in food has a long and contentious history. Proponents of GMOs frequently cite inconclusive and short-term scientific studies, but researchers have only recently begun looking at the impact of GMOs over an entire lifespan. A 2012 [peer-reviewed study in Food and Chemical Toxicology](#) found that 70% of lab rats fed GMO corn over their entire lives died prematurely from organ failure and tumors, compared to a control group eating non-GMO corn.

Consumer preference is also shifting. A recent [poll](#) found that 91% of citizens want GMOs to be labeled, "with no meaningful statistical difference between [...] any demographic." More than [75,000 people signed a petition](#) asking Abbott to remove GMOs from their infant formula. Whole Foods [announced](#) in March that it will require GMO labeling on all food sold in its stores in the next five years.

Over 60 countries including the entire European Union, Australia, China, Japan, India, and Russia now require GMO labeling. [Vermont is poised](#) to be the first state to mandate GMO labeling after the passage of a labeling bill, and Connecticut is following close behind. The recent labeling initiative in California lost by a razor-thin margin despite more than \$46 million spent by industry to defeat it. Major food companies including Walmart [are discussing lobbying for a national labeling program](#) to avoid inconsistent labeling requirements in each state.

As You Sow also co-filed [a resolution on genetically engineered seeds with DuPont](#), which investors will vote on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Behar will present the resolution in person at the annual meeting this Friday, April 26th at Abbott's Illinois headquarters. He expects strong support for the resolution, as investors encourage Abbott to get ahead of regulatory risk, improve its brand reputation, increase its association with health and caring for its customers, and fulfill its slogan – a promise for life.

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As You Sow is a nonprofit organization that promotes corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy, coalition building, and innovative legal strategies. For more information visit [www.asyousow.org](http://www.asyousow.org).