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Abbott Laboratories Shareholders Call for Action on Genetically Modified Ingredients

Shareholders Representing \$2.2 Billion Vote for Voluntary GMO Labeling

OAKLAND, CA - Shareholders at Abbott Laboratories' annual meeting sent a message to management and the Board of Directors that they are concerned about the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in the company's Similac infant formula. The second-year resolution, filed by environmental health advocacy organization [As You Sow](http://www.asyousow.org), was supported by 6.2% of shareholders, representing over \$2.2 billion in shares.

The [resolution](#) was filed by As You Sow after Abbott remained unwilling to address concerns about GMOs in its Similac infant formula and other products. Peer-reviewed scientific research has demonstrated that genetically modified crops can lead to increased pesticide use, pesticide-resistant weeds and insects, crop blights, and risks to public health.

"Shareholders are increasingly concerned about GMOs in Similac infant formula," said Andrew Behar, CEO of As You Sow. "They know that genetically modified crops are threatening America's health and its food security. Abbott has yet to address this concern in any meaningful way."

While GMOs are labeled or banned in 64 countries – including the European Union, India, Russia, China, and Japan – the U.S. has no such regulations, and does not conduct or require long-term safety studies on environmental or health impacts. According to a 2013 New York Times poll, 93% of American support GMO labeling. The Vermont legislature passed a GMO labeling law last week, and GMO labeling laws have already been passed in Maine, Connecticut, and Alaska.

"GMO labeling in the U.S. has begun, and its continuation is inevitable," said Austin Wilson, As You Sow's Environmental Health Program Manager. "By labeling its products now, Abbott will demonstrate its leadership and commitment to transparency, and increase shareholder value. With more disclosure, consumers will be able to make more informed decisions that help protect their family's health."

In January, food giant General Mills announced that it had [removed GMOs from Original Cheerios](#), prompted by dialogue with groups including As You Sow and a highly focused grassroots social media campaign. As investors called for continued progress on product reformulation, As You Sow filed another [shareholder resolution](#) with General Mills for their annual meeting in September.

The shareholder resolution at Abbott called on the company to identify and label all food products manufactured or sold under the its brand names or private labels that may contain genetically engineered ingredients, unless long-term safety testing demonstrates that genetically engineered crops, organisms, or products thereof are not harmful to humans, animals, and the environment.

As You Sow's [GMO initiative](#) works to raise awareness about the risks of GMOs with the food, beverage, and grocery industries and encourage transparency on their efforts to find and use alternatives.

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As You Sow is a nonprofit organization that promotes environmental and social corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy, coalition building, and innovative legal strategies. For more information visit www.asyousow.org.