

## Abbott Laboratories Launching Non-GMO Similac Infant Formula in US

Mark Astley | May 26, 2015



**Abbott Laboratories is launching a non-GMO version of its popular Similac Advance infant formula in the US - a decision it denies was fuelled by pressure from campaigners.**

Similac Advance Non-GMO infant formula - the first and only non-GMO labelled infant formula from a leading US manufacturer - will be available in selected Target stores across the US from this week.

Distribution will be extended in the fall, and non-GMO Similac Sensitive, a reduced-lactose infant formula, will hit shelves August.

"We have been working on this for a while," Lindsay Delco, spokesperson, Abbott Laboratories, told DairyReporter.com. "Similac Advance and non-GMO Similac Advance contain the exact same ingredients - just from different sources."

All Similac infant formula products - with the exception of Similac Organic - contain genetically-modified ingredients.

These products will continue to be sold in the US by Abbott, said Delco.

America's largest infant formula manufacturers - Abbott, Nestlé and Mead Johnson Nutrition - have repeatedly been petitioned to remove GMOs from their products. Such pressure, however, played no part in Abbott's decision to launch non-GMO versions of Similac Advance and Similac Sensitive, said Delco.

"Our decision really had nothing to do with that," she said. "We still believe products that use GMOs are safe."

"This is more about offering consumers choice."

"We've had a number of parents ask us to produce a non-GMO formula, and we've done that," she said.

For the last three years, **As You Sow**, a non-profit organization that promotes corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy, has tabled resolutions at Abbott's annual shareholder meeting.

In April 2015, it asked Abbott to publish a report on the use of genetically-engineered ingredients in its nutritional products.

The proposal was rejected by Abbott shareholders. Just 5.09% of the votes cast were in favour of a report.

In May 2014, an **As You Sow** proposal to label GMOs on Similac infant formula products was also rejected, with just 5.25% of votes cast in favour.

A year earlier, in April 2013, it proposed Abbott remove GMOs from products, including its Similac products, "until long-term safety testing proves GMOs are safe."

It was unsuccessful, receiving just 3% support from shareholders.

**As You Sow** was unavailable to comment prior to publication.