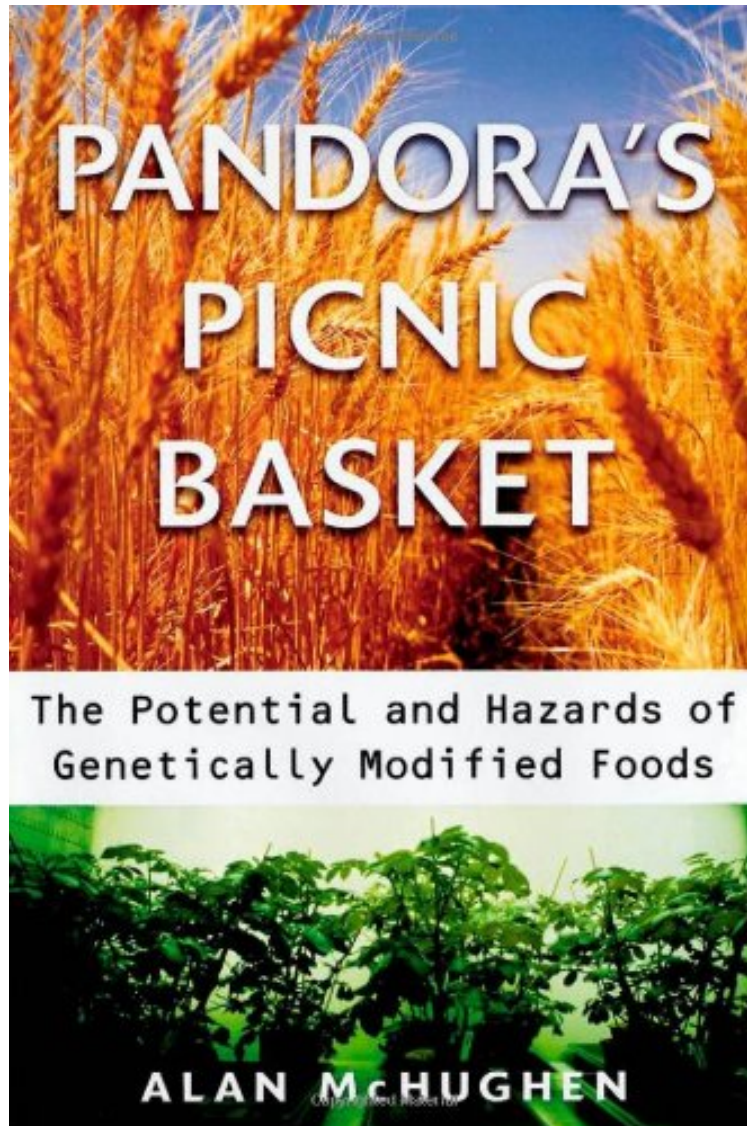


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Pandora's Picnic Basket: The Potential and Hazards of Genetically Modified Foods

Alan McHughen

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Alan McHughen : Pandora's Picnic Basket: The Potential and Hazards of Genetically Modified Foods before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pandora's Picnic Basket: The Potential and Hazards of Genetically Modified Foods:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Excellent objective analysisBy ShetlanderI found this book was an excellent survey of its subject. McHugen knows his stuff well and his descriptions from the point of view of somebody

who was trying to develop a strain of flax at his university in Canada was excellent. He also seemed to have a good grasp of the UK and US situations as well. Unfortunately the book is a little dated as it was written in 2000 but his comments are often surprisingly up to date and his history sections are extremely good. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Cynthia D. Whitelots of science - good look at the facts which will not support the hype about modified foods! 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Informative! By Lynne S. This book is great. It is objective and gets down to the nitty gritty issues. After reading this book you will almost be an expert on this subject. This is absolutely no "hot-air" in this book. It provides solid facts, in a conversational manner so it is not dry.

Did you know that there are fish genes in some tomatoes? That Brazil nut genes in soybeans can result in potentially lethal allergic reactions? That rapeseed plants bred to be resistant to herbicides could become uncontrollable superweeds? Genetically modified foods do pose real risks, and in recent years they have become the focus of a pitched battle between scientists, entrepreneurs, consumer advocates, and environmentalists. Yet despite the great heat generated by the debate, there is very little real information on the subject, either about the technologies in use or about the regulatory processes established to protect us from potentially dangerous products. Pandora's Picnic Basket explains, in clear and direct language, the technologies underlying genetically modified food, comparing them with other "natural" methods of plant breeding and production. Researcher Alan McHughen evaluates the safeguards in place from regulators around the world and asks whether these are sufficient. In particular, he examines the question of labeling, held by some to be an obvious way to help protect consumers, and addresses the honesty and usefulness of some of these labels. Throughout the book, McHughen offers fair-minded, well-informed accounts of issues of real concern, particularly environmental issues, and he outlines ways in which consumers can avoid genetically modified food if they so choose. The author uses question-and-answer boxes to address key issues and real case histories to illustrate the development and regulation of genetically modified food. Genetically modified foods are increasingly available to the public. Pandora's Picnic Basket will help consumers make informed choices about this controversial technology.

.com Throughout the developed world, debate is raging over the use of genetically modified (GM) food and food additives. This debate, Canadian agricultural scientist McHughen holds, is not well-informed. "Everyone, it seems, is concerned about GM food," he writes, "but most admit they don't really know much about it." This is especially true in North America, where millions of acres of GM crops are now produced and GM foods are widely consumed, although it is no less true of Europe, where production and consumption alike are comparatively low. McHughen recognizes that some of these concerns are well-founded, even if the discussion is not, and his book is a thoughtful examination of some of the basic scientific issues involved in whether genetic modification may turn out to yield harmful (or, conversely, beneficial) results. These issues, he goes on to say, are of two broad kinds: first, whether a GM product is safe for the environment, and whether it can be prevented from "escaping" into nature; and second, whether a GM product is safe for the animal or human consumer. His answers may not always please activists on either side of the issue, for he suggests that while in the main GM production is likely to be a good thing, particularly in areas of the world where agricultural yields are low, there may yet be unanticipated risks involved--especially because "nature has no plan for agricultural systems based on high chemical inputs and low biodiversity." --Gregory McNamee From Library Journal Fulfilling his promise to teach rather than preach, McHughen opens with a discussion of the basics of genetic modification technology before putting this technology within the larger contexts of food and environmental safety, risk assessment, corporate operations, politics, and ethics. First learning the basics will require some effort on the part of many readers, but McHughen is convinced that the scientific concepts are not that difficult for ordinary, interested people to comprehend. This is a refreshing approach to a subject often treated by the media and others with sensationalism, wild speculations, and rumors of "Frankenfoods." McHughen's qualifications are outstanding. He is a senior research scientist at the University of Saskatchewan, chair of the International Biosafety Advisory Committee of the Genetics Society of Canada, and developer of his own genetically modified organism, linseed. His emphasis here is on the United States, Canada, Britain, and Europe. McHughen covers some of the same ground as Stephen Nottingham's *Eat Your Genes* (LJ 7/98), but he focuses more on the technology while Nottingham reports on industry, governmental, and regulatory developments. For public and academic libraries. D William H. Wiese, Iowa State Univ. Lib., Ames Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist As a developer of genetically modified (GM) linseed flax plants and the father of a daughter allergic to nuts, McHughen is more conscious than most people of both growing and eating food. He strives to raise the quality of public debate about GM foods by making scientific information accessible. In general, he succeeds, though parts of the book will be tough sledding for lay readers, which an incomplete list of abbreviations used in the text and a lack of references don't help. McHughen explains enough genetics in enough detail so that genetics applications to plants are clear, and so is what Monsanto and other companies are trying to do. He punctures myths, often with a gentle chuckle, and anti-GM and pro-organic believers won't like all of what they might read. But, then, neither will the transnationals and their advertisers. After full

servings of science, common sense, and questions, McHughen concludes by advising readers to "stop worrying so much about your food; it's almost certainly healthier than you are." William Beatty Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved