

Association of perception towards genetically modified foods and its determinant factors among scientists in Bogor Agriculture Institute

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Abstrak

The debate surrounding genetically modified organism (GMO) has been emotive and multi-dimensional, attracting a wide range of participants. Conflicting arguments and partial truths have left consumers, farmers, public interest groups and food producers confused. Critics of GMOs have been exceptionally successful in raising the profile of genetically modified (GM) foods and have attracted public support from a wide audience including scientists. However, the study about consumer acceptance of GM foods is abundant, while study among scientists is limited. Scientists can provide proper explanations and information to consumer about GM products. Also, they usually are the first group to react if any unsafe GM foods enter the market. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to assess the perception of scientists towards genetically modified foods.

The study was designed as a cross sectional study. A total of 400 scientists (defined as one who involves in one or more activities covering teaching, research and consultancy) in Bogor Agriculture Institute (IPB or Institut Pertanian Bogor) were selected by using random sampling. Data collection for this study was done by face-to-face interview using structured questionnaire and self-administered questionnaire for assessing the knowledge of the respondents.

All of the collected data were coded and entered into SPSS 11.0 for Windows. Data analyses were done using frequency distribution for descriptive analysis and chi-square test for the association.

Nearly half of the respondent felt that they had basic understanding of GM foods. However, when their knowledge was assessed, 69.8% of them had good knowledge score. Most of them (71%) stated that they were aware with the term of GM foods. Respondents were questioned about their perceived intention when offered some GM foods. Majority (78.3%) of those surveyed stated that they would like to try it. Over 90% felt that there should be some form of labeling for distinguishing food containing GM ingredients from non-GM foods.

Overall, the results showed that majority (72.8%) of the respondents were for GM foods, 14.8% were neutral, and only 12.5% were against it.