

You can make food choices that matter

When you buy food, you play an important role in determining the future of our food system and its impact on people and the planet.

Even just a few choices can make a difference. Here are some options:

Choose organic or ecologically grown food. Regularly choosing to buy one or more certified organic products supports farmers who are committed to a high standard of care for our environment. Many uncertified ecological farmers also use organic standards as their guide. Talk to your farmer and learn how they produce food, from seed to your plate.

Eat with the season. Find out which fruits and vegetables are in season in your area and prioritize eating those foods at their freshest. Learn how to dry, can and store local food or support businesses that sell local preserves so you can eat more local food year-round.

Shop at your local farmers' market. Choose to be a regular customer to help local farms thrive.

Shop at your independent food store.

Independent stores are often vital in supporting local products, family farms and small food businesses in your community.

Avoid GMOs. You can avoid genetically modified organisms (GMOs) by buying organic food or Non-GMO Project verified products. Learn more about where GMOs are in our food system, including GM fruits and vegetables at cban.ca/gmfoods

Join a Community Supported Agriculture program (CSA). Look for local farmers who run CSAs. In exchange for buying a CSA share at the start of the year, you will get produce every week during the growing season. This model provides farmers with more cashflow when costs are highest, and can support young and new farmers in particular.

GM FOODS ON THE MARKET IN CANADA

Crop	Trait	Where on the shelves
01 CORN	Insect resistant, herbicide tolerant	Corn flakes • Corn chips • Corn oil and other corn ingredients in processed foods • Corn syrup Eggs, milk and meat* • Some sweet corn • There is no GM popcorn
02 CANOLA	Herbicide tolerant	Canola oil • Eggs, milk and meat*
03 SOY	Herbicide tolerant	Soy oil • Soy protein • Soy lecithin • Eggs, milk and meat*
04 SUGAR BEET (WHITE)	Herbicide tolerant	Sugar
05 ALFALFA	Herbicide tolerant, low-lignin	A small amount is grown to feed dairy cows and other farm animals. Not grown for sprouts.
06 PAPAYA	Virus-resistant	Whole papaya from US or China • Fruit juices
07 PINEAPPLE (PINK)	Pink coloured flesh	Whole pineapple, in a few grocery stores
08 TOMATO (PURPLE)	Deep purple colour	Whole purple tomatoes in plastic boxes, brand "Empress" from Red Sun Farms

*Many animals used to produce eggs, milk and meat are fed corn, canola and/or soy

GM FOODS COMING SOON?

Food	Trait	What
SALAD GREENS	Mustard greens with less pungent flavour	Packaged fresh salad greens, lettuce mixes
STRAWBERRIES	Longer harvest season, longer shelf life	Whole strawberries
APPLE	Non-browning	Bagged sliced apples sold in the US
POTATO	Non-browning, less acrylamide	Innate brand "White Russet" sold in the US

cban.ca/gmfoods

Your food choices can support a better future

ORGANIC

Worldwide, organic farmers follow animal welfare and environmental practices based on the four principles of health, ecology, fairness and care.



Organic farming practices are codified in standards regulated by the government. Certified organic farms are inspected every year by professional inspectors from independent certifying bodies.

Certified organic farmers do not use:

- synthetic pesticides or chemical fertilizers
- genetically modified (GM) seeds or animal feed
- antibiotics routinely, or hormones to stimulate growth
- sewage sludge or waste from factory farms on their fields

Organic food is a non-GMO choice. Organic farmers reject GM seeds and GM animals as unnecessary and risky.

LOCAL AND DIRECT

Buy local to:

- » Reduce the miles your food travels. This means fewer greenhouse gas emissions and fresher food.
- » Reduce food packaging and reduce food waste due to spoilage in transit.
- » Put more money directly into the pockets of local farmers and traditional harvesters to support local farms and protect surrounding food-producing lands, waterways, and locally managed wild foods.

YOUR FOOD CHOICES IN 2026

New GMOs, Pesticides, and Our Environment

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Food system snapshot

- » Much of the food we eat today is produced through a **long chain of steps in a global industrial food system**. This complex system contributes to the climate crisis, pollutes the environment, and takes power away from farmers, Indigenous peoples, and everyday consumers.
- » **A few large companies** control the global markets for seeds, pesticides and other products and technologies like genetic engineering. A few big grocery chains also dominate food sales in our communities.
- » Soon, the new genetic engineering (genetic modification or GM) techniques of gene editing could mean a flood of new genetically modified organisms (GMOs), such as **GM whole fruits and vegetables**.
- » **Organic and other ecological farmers** and harvesters are working to build food sovereignty, for a more resilient and just food system.

Corporate control

Just four companies control over half of the global seed and pesticide markets. This high level of corporate concentration drives up prices for farmers, limits farmer choice, and reduces seed diversity.

These top companies are also the global leaders in selling genetically engineered seeds (**genetically modified organisms or GMOs**).

Almost all the GM seeds currently grown are engineered to be herbicide-tolerant, which means they are designed to withstand spraying of particular herbicides that kill weeds. Herbicide sales in Canada have increased by 270% since the introduction of GM crops.

Because GM plants can spread to other farms and food-producing lands they are a threat to the future of organic and ecological farmers and harvesters who reject the use of GMOs.

BAYER is one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world and, after merging with Monsanto in 2018, Bayer is now also the largest seed company, second largest pesticide company, and largest seller of genetically engineered seed in the world. Bayer owns 23% of the global seed market and 15% of the global pesticides market.

Produced by the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), a project of MakeWay Charitable Society. www.cban.ca

Order copies at outreach@cban.ca

For more information or references see www.cban.ca/FoodChoices2026 • June 2026

Genetic engineering and new GMOs

Genetic engineering is also commonly called genetic modification. It is an invasive and inadequately understood technology that directly changes the genetic make-up of plants, animals and other organisms.

Gene editing is a category of new genetic engineering techniques used to alter the genetic material of plants, animals and other organisms to create genetically modified organisms (GMOs). New gene editing techniques, such as CRISPR, aim to delete DNA segments or otherwise change a DNA sequence.

Unlike traditional plant and animal breeding, genetic engineering makes changes directly to the genetic make-up of organisms.

New GMOs could be on the market soon. Until now, most GMOs were corn, canola and soy used as ingredients in processed food and animal feed, but companies want to start selling GM whole fruits and vegetables, such as gene-edited salad greens and strawberries.

In January 2026, Health Canada approved virus-resistant **gene-edited pigs** for human consumption but the meat from these genetically engineered animals will not be labelled. **There is no mandatory labelling** to identify GMOs in grocery stores.

The Canadian government has removed regulation for most gene-edited plants if these new GMOs have no foreign DNA (no DNA from other species). This means that many gene-edited plants and foods can enter our food system and environment without any government safety assessments or independent science, and no notification to farmers or consumers. **There is no government approval process and no government oversight.**

Toxic pesticides

Pesticides (herbicides, insecticides and fungicides) are chemicals designed to kill weeds, insects and other pests and diseases that can reduce the quantity and quality of food crops.

Many farmers in Canada rely on the extensive use of synthetic pesticides that contaminate the soil, air and water, and can have harmful impacts on human health and on biodiversity, including birds and beneficial insects such as pollinators. Fertilizers and manure runoff can also pollute aquatic ecosystems.

Glyphosate is the most widely used herbicide in the world. In 2015, the International Agency for Cancer Research of the World Health Organization concluded that it is a probable human carcinogen.

Neonics (neonicotinoids) are pesticides that are commonly applied as coatings on seeds. They are widely used on corn and soy, and some vegetables such as potatoes. These pesticides spread throughout the whole plant as it grows and contaminate the plant's nectar and pollen, making the plant dangerous to wild native bees, honeybees and other pollinators. They also seep into the soil and groundwater, harming aquatic ecosystems.

Climate crisis

Agriculture and food systems account for about one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions. This includes emissions from producing food, clearing forests or other ecosystems to make way for farming, manufacturing pesticides and fertilizers, and energy-intensive activities such as heating greenhouses, and processing, packaging and transporting food.

Growing crops and animals contributes approximately 48% of this total, largely because of nitrous oxide from fertilizers and methane from livestock production.