A Quick Guide To Nutritional Engineering

(NAPSA)—While a growing number of people are trying to eat healthily, there is still some confusion about the meaning of some of the terms used to describe the way foods are processed.

Here’s a guide to some of the more commonly used terms, such as GMO, organic and irradiation—from the experts at Giant Eagle Inc. Supermarkets.

“GMOs” stands for genetically modified organisms, foods most commonly used to refer to crop plants created for consumption using the latest molecular biology techniques.

These plants are modified to increase resistance to herbicides, improve nutritional content, increase resistance to disease, and reduce the need for pesticides. The FDA states that GMO foods are substantially equivalent to non-GMO foods and therefore not subject to more stringent labeling.

In 1996, Congress passed the Organic Foods Production Act which created three levels of organic labeling:

• “100 percent organic” for products that contain 100 percent organic ingredients;
• “organic” for products containing 95 percent organic ingredients; and
• “made with organic ingredients” for products containing 70 to 95 percent organic ingredients.

The USDA Organic label may appear only on products that are 100 percent organic or contain at least 95 percent organic ingredients.

In food irradiation, the food is exposed to a carefully measured amount of radiant energy for a specific amount of time. Irradiation works by disrupting the organic processes that lead to food decay.

Food irradiation has been researched since 1950 and has been found to be a safe and effective food treatment. Irradiation can also extend the shelf life of many foods at a competitive cost, thereby providing benefits to shoppers by the use of fungicides and chemicals.

The experts at Giant Eagle—which now has more than 200 stores—believe irradiation is safe and effective at reducing the risk of food-borne pathogens. This might be considered a logical first step for a chain of stores that in the 1990s created Nature’s Bas- ket, making it easier for health-con-scious customers to find food and information resources that fit their lifestyle.

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