



November 20, 2013

Mr. Donald Thompson, CEO
McDonald's Corporation
2111 McDonald's Dr.
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Dear Mr. Thompson:

We were pleased to learn that you recently confirmed that you have no plans to use or sell the genetically engineered Artichoke in any of your products, and we are writing to ask you to make the same commitment to not purchase the genetically engineered potato created by one of your largest suppliers, J.R. Simplot Company. This new variety, the Innate potato, is being touted as lower in cancer-causing acrylamide, but this potato is anything but healthy—and we and the more than 102,000 Food & Water Watch supporters, whose signatures I've enclosed, are urging you to keep them out of children's Happy Meals and off the McDonald's menu entirely.

Both of the desired traits the potato is engineered to suppress (the other trait being the reduction of bruising) are achieved through the reduced expression of enzymes, affecting the amino acid asparagine for the low acrylamide trait and the enzyme polyphenol oxidase (PPO) for reduced bruising. The problem is that an alteration in just one enzyme can unintentionally affect other plant characteristics as well as the plant's health, with potentially unforeseen consequences for human health. This is the core reason why consumers distrust genetically engineered foods: there have been no long-term safety studies conducted to examine their effects on humans. Finally, they are largely deregulated and there are no mandatory labels so that consumers can decide whether or not they purchase a food that has been genetically altered. All of these factors have led consumers to question the technology.

As you know, historically, GE potatoes have not fared so well in the marketplace for these very reasons. Monsanto's NewLeaf GE potatoes were approved in 1995, but the company pulled its potatoes from the market in 2001 because they knew companies like McDonalds wouldn't sell it. We're asking for you to make that wise decision again.

McDonald's has built its reputation in part on its "World Famous Fries," and consumer backlash against genetically engineered foods is growing, not receding. Certainly, McDonalds does not want its reputation intertwined with this issue by selling biotech fries.

We are appealing to you because you have the power to make a good decision for consumers as the top purchaser of potatoes in the United States. Your company could be a leader by publicly disclosing their unwillingness to source this product. Therefore, we urge you to decline purchasing this genetically engineered potato from J.R. Simplot.

Sincerely,

Wenonah Hauter
Executive Director