



## Infant Formula: Baby's First GMOs

May 7, 2013

We talk a lot here about labeling of genetically modified ingredients. The fact is, we can probably surmise that tasty bag of snack chips likely got its start in a field of GMO corn or soybean. Same goes for that supersized soda. But when it comes to baby formula, the complicated ingredients may not immediately shout "GMOs inside!" to overtired and probably overwhelmed new parents skimming the back label.

That's why **As You Sow**, a nonprofit group that focuses on shareholder advocacy, introduced a resolution at the Abbott Laboratory shareholders meeting in late April, asking the company to remove genetically modified ingredients, like soy, from their Similac products until long-term safety testing has shown GMOs are not harmful. The resolution asked that the company label products in the interim.

According to Dairy Reporter, Abbott urged shareholders to reject the proposal, saying: "The large-scale production of certain genetically-modified crops has made it difficult to obtain enough non-GMO supply to meet global demand."

Shareholders complied, and overwhelmingly rejected the resolution, with 904,369,801 voting against the resolution; 30,029,557 voted in favor of it.

Andrew Behar, CEO of **As You Sow**, tells TakePart that the 3.21 percent of votes they did win were enough to bring the resolution back to the Abbott Laboratories shareholder meeting next year. More immediately, the vote caught the attention of executives at the company, and has spurred a meeting between Abbott and **As You Sow**, which Behar says should happen before the end of the calendar year.

"We consider the vote successful," he says. "We're going to continue this dialogue with the company. We want to see change in infant formulas and toddler cereals, and we're going to spread [other shareholder resolutions] to more infant formula companies."

Plenty of public opinion polls show Americans want labeling of genetically modified ingredients, and lawmakers have introduced initiatives in 24 states, along with Senator Boxer's recent federal legislation proposal. But the fact is, the nation's corporations are still resisting in a big way, including cereal giant General Mills, whose CEO Kendall Powell went on record saying the company has no intention of sourcing non-GMO ingredients.