

What is a GMO?

GMO stands for Genetically Modified Organism. These organisms go through genetic engineering and have had their genetic makeup (DNA) altered in ways that do not occur in nature or through traditional cross-breeding methods. For example, genetic engineers have transferred genes from a bacterium known as *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt, into the DNA of corn. Bt genes express a protein that kills insects, and transferring the genes allows the corn to produce its own pesticide. So, foods that contain GMOs are supposed to make bigger and better food with less work. We are not scientists here at Chef Rubber but when we look at this we can't help to think that this is another way to further industrialize and consolidate our food and agriculture system. At Chef Rubber, we believe ingredients are best the way nature intended – organically grown and straight from the farm as much as possible. We have concerns that increasing GMO crops come at the expense of smaller farms. Our mission is to support local family farms, and we will continue to support local family farms. Instead of mandatory standards that are prohibitively expensive for our local farmers, we are simply developing our own standards to avoid the use of GMO ingredients.

**Our Definitions;** When we refer to a “GMO” (or “genetically modified organism”) we are using this term as most popularly used and widely understood in the US: an organism that has been created with techniques that allow DNA from one species to be injected into another species in a laboratory. This creates combinations of plant, animal, bacteria, and viral genes that do not occur in nature or through traditional cross-breeding methods. “Non-GMO by Origin” refers to seed sources that have not undergone genetic modification. Either the crop is not commercially available as a GMO crop or, if the option is available, refers to the non-GMO version. Traceability to the original non-GMO seed source is key. This is the standard that Chef Rubber adheres to when sourcing our ingredients. Where an ingredient in any of our products is not specifically certified as non-GMO or organic, it is considered a low risk ingredient for genetic modification.

**Chef Rubber's “Non-GMO” standards:** All of our suppliers are asked to provide a statement saying their product is either non-GMO or organic. All of our major ingredients are non-GMO as defined by the Non-GMO Project, We do know the suppliers of these ingredients well beyond our control and ensure that the animals are humanely treated and antibiotic free. Since the beginning, we've sourced cocoa from local family farmers. Our position is in line with current regulations in most countries with mandatory GMO labeling requirements, including the European Union.

Where will we go from here? The consumer movement for transparency and the right to know what is in our food supply is growing, and we are proud to stand along side and help with this. We believe it is a fundamental right to know what is in the products you buy and the foods you eat.

While most of our ingredients are already sourced non-GMO, we feel it is important to communicate clearly what we use for our products and the various attributes of each.