



**TO: Just Label It!**  
**FROM: The Mellman Group, Inc.**  
**RE: Voters Want GMO Food Labels Printed On Packaging**  
**DATE: November 23, 2015**

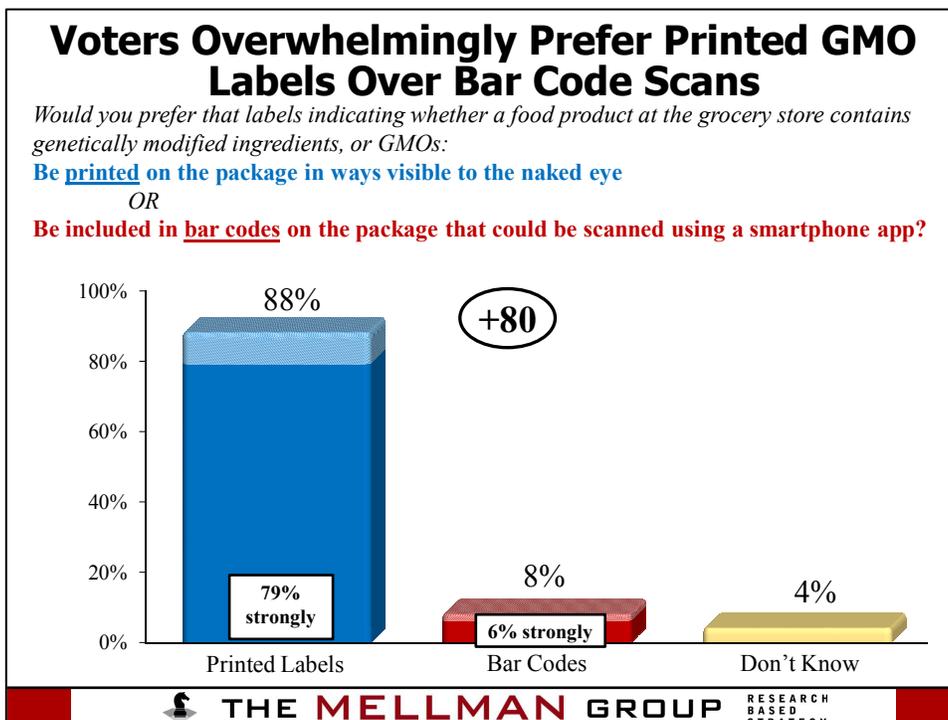
*This analysis represents the findings of a survey of 800 likely 2016 general election voters. Interviews were conducted by telephone November 16-19, 2015 using a national registration-based sample which contacted both mobile and landline phones. The margin of error for this survey is +/-3.5% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.*

## NEARLY ALL VOTERS CONTINUE TO WANT GMO FOODS LABELED

For years, American voters have been nearly unanimous in supporting mandatory labeling of foods containing genetically modified ingredients. This poll of likely 2016 voters once again confirms that result, with 89% saying they favor mandatory labels on “foods which have been genetically engineered or containing genetically engineered ingredients be labeled to indicate that.” A mere 6% oppose such a requirement and another 6% don’t know<sup>1</sup>.

Views continue to be remarkably intense, with a 77% supermajority not only favoring mandatory labeling but “strongly” favoring the proposal. These views are widespread across demographic lines, with nearly all Democrats (92% favor, 2% oppose), independents (89% favor, 7% oppose) and

Republicans (84% favor, 7% oppose) supporting a required label.



## SUPPORT FOR PRINTED LABELS RATHER THAN ELECTRONIC BAR CODES IS NEARLY UNANIMOUS

We also presented voters with a choice between GMO labels printed on the package or bar codes that could be scanned with a smartphone, as some have proposed. By similarly overwhelming margins, voters prefer that GMO labels on food

<sup>1</sup>"As you may know, it has been proposed that the Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, require that foods which have been genetically engineered or contain genetically engineered ingredients be labeled to indicate that. Would you favor or oppose requiring labels for foods that have been genetically engineered or contain genetically engineered ingredients? Is that strongly or not so strongly?"

products be printed on the package, with 88% saying they prefer printed labels (79% strongly favor), while just 8% prefer scannable bar codes<sup>2</sup>.

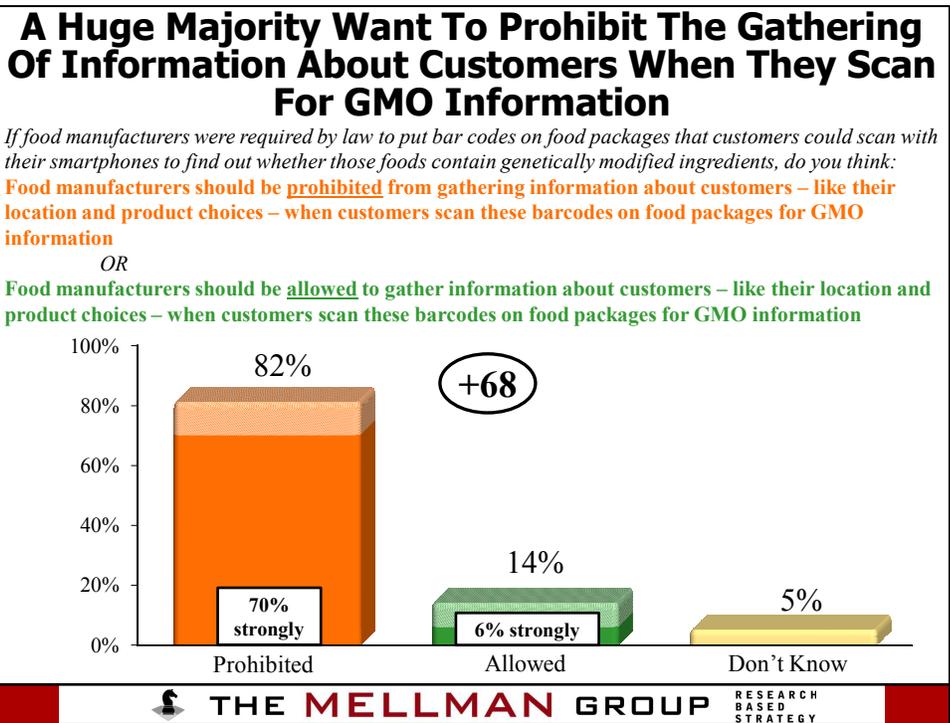
Voters' preference for printed over scannable labels also proves quite intense, with 79% "strongly" favoring printed over bar code labels. These views too are widespread across demographic lines, with nearly identical proportions of Democrats (88% favor, 8% oppose), independents (90% favor, 4% oppose) and Republicans (88% favor, 10% oppose) preferring printed labels.

Support for printed labels extends across not just party lines, but spans demographic segments, including gender (men: 87% printed labels, 9% bar code scans; women: 90% printed labels, 7% bar code scans), age (under 50: 86% printed labels, 13% bar code scans; over 50: 90% printed labels, 4% bar code scans), race (white: 90% printed labels, 7% bar code scans; African-American: 94% printed labels, 5% bar code scans; Hispanic: 82% printed labels, 16% bar code scans), and region of the country (Northeast: 95% printed labels, 4% bar code scans; Midwest: 85% printed labels, 9% bar code scans; South: 85% printed labels, 11% bar code scans; West: 92% printed labels, 3% bar code scans).

**A HUGE MAJORITY WANT TO PROHIBIT FOOD MANUFACTURERS FROM GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT CUSTOMERS WHO SCAN BAR CODES FOR GMO INFORMATION**

If voters were forced to scan bar codes in order to obtain GMO information, they would not want to be turned into involuntary market research subjects in the process.

We presented voters with a hypothetical situation in which GMO labels had been mandated in the form of bar codes and asked whether manufacturers should be prohibited from, or allowed to, gather information about customers (like their location and product choices) from such bar codes.<sup>3</sup>



A huge 82% majority say such data collection should be prohibited, including 70% who feel that way "strongly" compared to just 14% who say such data collection should be allowed.

<sup>2</sup> "Would you prefer that labels indicating whether a food product at the grocery store contains genetically modified ingredients or GMOs [ROTATE] \_\_ be printed on the package in ways visible to the naked eye OR \_\_ be included in bar codes on the package that could be scanned using a smartphone app?"

<sup>3</sup> "If food manufacturers were required by law to put bar codes on food packages that customers could scan with their smartphones to find out whether those foods contain genetically modified ingredients, do you think: [ROTATE STATEMENTS] \_\_ Food manufacturers should be prohibited from gathering information about customers – like their location and product choices – when customers scan these bar codes on food packages for GMO information? OR \_\_ Food manufacturers should be allowed to gather information about customers – like their location and product choices – when customers scan these bar codes on food packages for GMO information?"

Once again, these results hold up across partisanship, with supermajorities of Democrats (81% favor, 14% oppose), independents (84% favor, 11% oppose) and Republicans (81% favor, 16% oppose) all saying food manufacturers should be prohibited from gathering information about customers who scan bar codes for GMO information.

#### **BAR CODE AND QR CODES ARE RARELY USED**

Fewer than 1-in-4 have *ever* scanned either a bar code or a QR code to obtain information about a food product. Just 17% say they have *ever* scanned a bar code to get information (and only 5% say they do so regularly). Only 16% say they have ever scanned a “QR” code (only 3% regularly). And these usage rates do not go up among those who have the primary responsibility for their household’s shopping decisions. Among those with primary responsibility for shopping in their households, only 17% say they have ever scanned a bar code to get information and only 16% say they have ever scanned a QR code for that purpose.