

Risks and benefits of genetically engineered crops to local growers, consumers, and the larger community

Producers

	Risks	Benefits	comments
Wine grapes	Winery/consumer resistance to GE GE pollination of cover crops could affect status of organic growers	Possible Pierce's disease-free rootstock	
Pears	Important markets now demanding "GE-free" label on pears		No GE pears exist or are expected any time soon
Walnuts	Walnuts produce abundant pollen that travels long distances, and the crop <i>is</i> the seed. GE pollination could destroy price advantage enjoyed by organic growers	Bacteria-resistant rootstock in development	
Market gardens (specifically sweet corn producers)	Strong resistance among some consumers, who buy directly from producers	Bt corn free of earworms/corn borers Bt and Roundup Ready corn may be easier to grow	
Pharmaceuticals	If field grown, GE pollination of either conventional or organic crops could make them unsalable	Opportunity to grow high-value crop if safety issue can be addressed	
Soy, canola			Possibility of growing non-GE variety in LC
Hay (alfalfa, wheat grass, etc)	possible creation of resistant weeds if herbicide-resistant alfalfa or other hay crops are grown* possible gene flow into feral alfalfa or other wild plants including grasses (in the case of grass hay) some livestock owners would be unwilling to feed GE products to their animals	Roundup Ready alfalfa (if allowed by courts) could provide extra weed-free cutting, and may be seen by some farmers as easier to grow GE grass hay might be cheaper to produce	
other			GE-free area in LC could provide opportunity for production of conventional/organic seed

*herbicide resistant weeds are an issue with *all* Roundup Ready crops; on the other hand, all these crops may be safer to farmworkers and the environment than other herbicide programs

Consumers

	Risks	Benefits	comments
Sweet corn	Possible pollination of conventional or organic corn could make local non-GE corn hard to find	Bt variety free of earworms	
Cattle, horses, sheep, etc	Possible consumer resistance to animals fed GE hay	Increased supply of weed-free hay, possibly at lower cost	“branding” of Lake County grassfed beef as GE-free could provide a selling point and possible price advantage

The community as a whole

	Risks	Benefits	comments
Lake County’s image	Impeding “green/clean” image to detriment of tourist industry as well as agriculture	Seen as farmer-friendly (but not all farmers)	Opposite effects from comprehensive GE regulations (if well-publicized as part of a coordinated marketing plan)
Invasive weed management	Evolution of herbicide resistance (if herbicide-tolerant products are grown)		
Agricultural real estate	Possibility that land where GE-crops are grown could become ineligible for future organic certification	Ag land prices could rise if GE varieties led to new opportunities or better margins	