

# Survey Reveals Consumers

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Yet when asked about GM crops, what was the first thing that "popped into their heads," said Hallman, when they heard those terms? "One quarter of the population has no idea what you're talking about. It's a complete blank. Nothing comes to (their) mind."

Though they claim to immediately grasp the concept of GM foods, and believe they are willing to use GM foods with direct health benefits (such as Vitamin A in rice to prevent blindness), about 90 percent of the U.S. population believe the "balance of nature can easily be disrupted using GM crops." Fifty-eight percent believe "we have no business meddling with nature," noted Hallman.

Thirty-five percent believe we'd be "better if we did not do GM at all," Hallman said.

Eighty percent of the respondents agree that "humans are fallible, there could be serious consequences" using GM techniques, with mistakes "bound to happen."

Forty percent of Americans believe that "most food in the country is grown on the family farm," and that many believe farming is a "noble, wholesome," occupation. About 38 percent believe that farmers have to "adopt GM to survive."

Said Hallman, "It's more about the products of biotech than the process of biotech that will determine whether consumers will accept biotechnology products."

Ninety percent believe GM products should have special labels, yet 48 percent said they would not buy fresh vegetables produced through genetic modification.

In the end, most Americans are "relatively uninformed



**Dr. William Hallman, associate director of the Food Policy Institute at Rutgers/Cook College, spoke about the public perception of ag biotechnology.**

about biotech," said Hallman, "and many are still making up their minds."

The Institute has recently been rewarded a \$2.5 million grant from USDA to conduct a study on "consumer response to biotech." The New Jersey Cooperative Extension Service, in cooperation with the Institute, will conduct the survey — but they need advice about which questions to ask. Hallman noted that those interested may contact him at his e-mail. The survey will be under way in about three months. For more information or to contribute questions, contact Hallman at (732) 932-1966, ext. 3103.

New Jersey produce growers now have a way to advertise, for free, the products they sell.



**About 150 exhibitors and about 1,200 attendees visited the trade show at the New Jersey Annual Vegetable Meeting. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor**



**Pegi Ballister-Howells, New Jersey Farm Bureau, spoke about the N.J. Produce Growers Directory on the Web.**

According to Pegi Ballister-Howells, New Jersey Farm Bureau marketing consultant, growers have a free opportunity to sign up to list products grown on the Website, which allows

users to select for particular crops and provides them with specific information.

The site is located at [www.njfb.org/directory](http://www.njfb.org/directory).

The New Jersey Farm Bureau received matching grants worth about \$20,000 to "put this together at no charge to any New Jersey farmer who wants to participate," said Ballister-Howells.

The form can be filled out on the Website or can be obtained directly from Farm Bureau and mailed in.

The Vegetable Growers' Association of New Jersey has about

1,500 members. About 154 exhibitors attended the three-day show from Tuesday through Thursday.

According to Phil Traino, association secretary, growers from all over the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast attended the popular event in Atlantic City, including those from the Eastern Shore, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York.

More event coverage is scheduled for an upcoming issue of *Lancaster Farming's Grower & Marketer* section.



## Md. Teen Crowned

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public speaking, team sales, graphic design, and poster contests at the National Junior Angus Show.

In team sales she won her first time in competition. She was also winner of a national contest where contestants analyzed data to develop a breeding program to increase yearling weight.

She has served as vice president and president of the Maryland Junior Angus Association.

She has been a member of the National Junior Angus Association since 1996. Last year she qualified for junior association's Silver Award, the second level of the organization's Recognition Program that began in 1972.

Cortney attends nearby Howard Community College, which enables her to stay close to home to take care of the animals. She is studying elementary education but is also interested in agriculture education.

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