

Box 5- Omissions from the model

A topical example at the time of writing (1999) is the debate over the introduction of genetically modified (GM) foods into the UK. The models used to support their introduction include estimates of the likely economic and nutritional benefits to the UK, and of the health risks involved (which are believed to be very small). However, these models did not include any consideration of the potential effects of GM crops, from which the foods would be produced, on the wildlife of farmland. This omission has been one major contributor to the acrimony of the debate, and the rejection by a substantial minority of the entire argument in favour of such crops.