

Food Fight: Anti-GMO Friends of the Earth attacks study on deceptively marketed organic foods

This article was written by Kari Hamerschlag, a former Latin studies major, who now works for the anti-GMO advocacy organization Friends of the Earth.

Several weeks ago, a group called Academics Review published a [report harshly attacking](#) the organic industry and its nonprofit allies for what they called “deceptive marketing practices,” designed to instill “false and misleading consumer health and safety perceptions about competing conventional foods.” And while most coverage of the study appeared in small and agriculture-focused publications, some other sources, like the *New York Post* and Food Safety News, picked up the story without much in-depth research about its source.

But the more important questions here, and ones overlooked by the glaring headlines, is who is behind the Academic Review and how might they benefit from dragging organics through the mud?

Academics Review claims to be an “independent association of academic professors” and “researchers” from around the world “committed to the unsurpassed value of the peer review in establishing sound science.” However, recent articles on its website and Facebook page paint another picture. Many articles on the website focus on discrediting public interest organizations, organic companies, media outlets, and scientists who question the safety of genetically engineered foods (or GMOs) and pesticides or touting the benefits of an organic diet.

The Academics Review report does do a good job of documenting the marketing tactics of dozens of companies and their allies. However, it provides scant evidence to back up its fundamental premise that these marketing strategies are deceitful and that eaters in fact have nothing to fear from conventional food, or that there are no appreciable health, nutritional, or safety advantages of organic over genetically engineered and other conventional foods.

The relatively small amount of money spent by the organic industry to support mission-aligned nonprofits is nothing compared to the more than a billion dollars that the agribusiness industry has spent over the last decade in lobbying and on PR front groups or “industry trade groups” to help spin a story about the safety of chemical-intensive and GMO foods.

Read the full, original article: [More Spin Than Science: The Latest Efforts to Take Down Organics](#)