

Former US Secretary of Agriculture Glickman criticizes organic industry for misleading marketing

A blockbuster report by the scientific-integrity watchdog Academics Review examines the last 25 years of academic and organic industry market research, public statements and often questionable marketing practices. What they have found should be raising red flags for all of us.

The organic industry likes to project a friendly image of small farmers and contented cows. But as this report extensively documents, the behavior of this multibillion-dollar industry is considerably less benign. Among the other findings is the extent to which the large organic food corporations engage in what it describes as deceptive advertising linked to scientifically baseless scares about conventional food.

Worse, this “black marketing” takes place with the implied approval of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Organic Seal and the silent acquiescence of the regulatory authorities charged with ensuring that all labeling and advertising be “truthful and non-misleading.” The Organic Seal does not and cannot signify any health or safety criteria whatsoever. It merely certifies that products were produced using less modern inputs.

“Let me be clear about one thing,” said USDA Secretary Dan Glickman when organic certification was being considered. “The organic label is a marketing tool. It is not a statement about food safety. Nor is ‘organic’ a value judgment about nutrition or quality.” Yet USDA’s own research shows consumers buy higher priced organic products because they mistakenly believe them safer and more nutritious.

I am supportive of those who choose to grow organic food and those who choose to buy it. However, I do not accept the organic industry’s attack on new tech agriculture. It is entirely without justification. If the roles were reversed and conventional agriculture engaged in similar “black marketing” against organics, the regulatory authorities and consumer groups would come down like a ton of bricks.

One wonders why, then, this multibillion-dollar industry gets a free ride to propagate negative and false advertising denigrating the livelihood of the vast majority of America’s farmers. It’s time for it to stop.

Read the full, original article: [Organic marketing: Not truthful, often misleading](#)