

## Possible dialogue? Food Babe rebuffs criticism in science students “open letter”

On January 22nd, 2015, a group of science students from the IFT Student Association [wrote me a letter](#). Here is my response:

Dear Future Science Students In Training,

Thank you so much for your letter, which I greatly appreciated receiving.

Here are a few guidelines for my work that I hope you will consider.

First, synthetic ingredients in our food should be proven safe before they are put into our bodies. The current system in the United States, unlike Europe, considers most chemicals innocent until proven guilty. Absolute proof of harm is not a moral standard for protecting public health – that is for the realm of theoretical science only. When there is significant evidence, short of certainty, we should protect the public from unnecessary risk. As you know most of the chemicals in our food supply have never been independently tested for safety by a 3rd party or the FDA. Can we join forces to insist they should be?

Meanwhile, I do take issue with your assertion that there is no evidence that organic products are better for health. Avoiding neurotoxic, endocrine disrupting, carcinogenic and teratogenic (birth defect) chemicals is of course more protective of people's health, not to mention the health of other species including the microorganisms both human and soil health depend on. And studies have shown higher vitamin and mineral levels in organic produce, due most likely to healthier soil with more beneficial bacteria and fungi.

Likewise I respectfully disagree with your statement that GMO crops are “proven to be substantially equivalent to native crops.” What GMO crops are proven to do is produce novel proteins that have never before existed, with which we did not evolve, and which are not required to be tested for safety before being put into the food supply. And how could the crossing of plant and animal genes into new species be “equivalent to native crops” or the same as plant breeding techniques? This is a biotech industry PR line, truly. An even bigger problem with GMO crops is they are being used primarily to increase the pesticide and herbicide load in the environment. And these chemicals are leaching into food. There is significant evidence that one of them, Round-Up, is an endocrine mimicking chemical. In the theoretical scientific world one can wait for proof of causation – that is not a moral standard when it comes to protecting the public. At the very least, the public has a right to know when foods are engineered, which the food companies oppose.

In Europe they use the precautionary principle – if there is significant evidence of harm, absolute proof is not required to act. Sadly in our country, the burden is on the public to prove safety instead of the food companies. My readers and I are out to change that, and I hope you will join with us to make a healthier and truly sustainable food system to truly feed the world.

Yours sincerely,

Vani Hari

**Original post:** [Response To “An Open Letter To Food Babe” From Science Meets Food](#)