

Marion Nestle: 'Conflicted studies conflicted if biotech or organic lobby pays for them

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

On August 6, the New York Times had [another front-page \(and on the inside, full-page\) story](#) on the food industry's financial relationships with academic scientists.

The article describes how Monsanto funded scientists to lobby for GMOs in Washington (I will say more about this in a subsequent post).

But, as is clear from this report, the organic industry is doing much the same.

It seems that Charles Benbrook, a strong proponent of organics (as am I), was working with (for?) the Organic Valley Cooperative on a public relations campaign to promote [his organics-funded study](#) demonstrating that organic milk has a healthier fatty acid profile than conventional milk.

I vaguely remember him contacting me about the study, but I didn't write anything about it. It appeared to be an industry-funded study with results favoring the sponsor's interests—much as, in this case, I sympathize with those interests.

A few months later, I did write [write about another conflicted organic study](#):

The study is not independently funded....This study is another example of how the outcome of sponsored research invariably favors the sponsor's interests. The paper says "the [Sheepdrove] Trust had no influence on the design and management of the research project and the preparation of publications from the project," but that's exactly what studies funded by Coca-Cola say. It's an amazing coincidence how the results of sponsored studies almost invariably favor the sponsor's interests. And that's true of results I like just as it is of results that I don't like.

Benbrook [has been criticized recently](#) for not fully disclosing his ties to the organic industry. Even if he had, disclosure is not enough.

The bottom line: Conflicted studies are conflicted, no matter who pays for them.

Read full, original post: [Another exposé of industry-funded scientists: this time, GMOs and organics](#)