

Fading organic movement ratchets up fear-based marketing campaign

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The organic-products industry is running scared. Challenged by progress in modern genetic engineering and state-of-the-art pesticides the organic movement is ratcheting up its rhetoric while trying to expand a consumer base that shows signs of stagnating.

A recent study shows that organic sales “have hit something of a plateau” and that about half of consumers think an organic label is just an excuse to charge more money.

“Let me be clear about one thing, the organic label is a marketing tool,” said then secretary of agriculture Dan Glickman when organic certification was being considered. “It is not a statement about food safety. Nor is ‘organic’ a value judgment about nutrition or quality.”

In spite of its “good vibes,” organic farming is an affront to the environment. Plant pathologist Dr. Steve Savage recently analyzed the data from USDA’s 2014 Organic Survey and compared yields at organic farms to those at conventional farms. Of the 68 crops surveyed, there was a “yield gap” — poorer performance of organic farms — in 59.

These findings are important. As Savage observed: “To have raised all U.S. crops as organic in 2014 would have required farming of 109 million more acres of land. That is an area equivalent to all the parkland and wildland areas in the lower 48 states.” Organic agriculture wastes not only land but water.

Genetic engineering is providing consumer-friendly as well as agronomically important traits including potatoes that produce less of the carcinogen acrylamide when fried, to apples that resist browning, to papayas and oranges that resist disease.

Like the buggy-whip manufacturers who ridiculed and reviled the horseless carriage, the organic industry is on the wrong side of history.

Read full, original post: [Organic Farms, Wasting Water and Land for Far Lower Yields](#)