

## Behind the NY Times glyphosate fiasco: Why anti-GMO activists turned on Ben & Jerry's

**PREAMBLE- MY VIEW ON ORGANIC PRODUCTION.** Organic production has an important place in modern agriculture. It is good to test how various techniques and approaches can limit or change agricultural inputs, or produce a more profitable crop for farmers. While many are critical of the discipline I have always been a supporter, as **organic production has an important role in the agricultural tapestry**. Findings from organic agriculture are sometimes even extending and informing conventional practices, and can be extremely valuable in places where conventional inputs (pesticides, fertilizers) are not available.

At the same time I acknowledge that the blanket health, yield, and impact claims are not justified and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. I also have strong opinions about exemptions provided for organic farm labor and the non-use of antibiotics when animals need them to cure infection. It is a subject with much nuance.

**OCA — A DANGEROUS FRINGE.** The Organic Consumers Association (OCA) is a radical fringe arm related remotely to the massive organic industry. You will not find information about cover crops and integrated pest management on their website. It is not about organic farming. It is about radicalized activism that attacks corporations they deem unacceptable, scientists they want silenced, and political movements that don't adhere to their agenda. In speaking with folks in the organic industries and academia, OCA does not represent their values, and in many ways works against their mission.

It should be stated that OCA financed a campaign to destroy my career and personal life, so I do harbor more than a little contempt for this organization.

**[Editor's note: Read the GLP's profile of the [Organic Consumers Association](#).]**

**BEN AND JERRY BECOME A TARGET.** [In a prior blog](#), I wrote about the report that claims glyphosate (a relatively benign weed killer) was identified in 10 of 11 flavors of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream. I dismissed the report, as it was **no methods were reported, it was not peer reviewed**, and detecting glyphosate is difficult (but it can be done at the levels reported if you do it right). Furthermore, to do it right is incredibly difficult in milk-based compounds like ice cream. Plus in the off chance the numbers were real, they were not biologically relevant.


**WHY BEN AND JERRY?** Simply put, **this was an orchestrated hit piece against the brand**. At first it seemed strange that granola-crunchy Ben and Jerry would be the targets of OCA, coordinating their take-down with the *New York Times*. But this is how OCA and their media agents operate. They manufacture false narratives and then use complicit reporters to publish untrue or marginally true extrapolations in visible media outlets. The website gets the hits, and OCA's target takes a hard reputation hit. Clickbait designed to assassinate. Ask me how I know.

Ben and Jerry's brand has a quaint history. Started by two dudes in a gas station featuring kitschy flavors

and a clear sustainability ethic, the brand eventually grew onto the radar of corporate grocery producers. The brand was purchased by Unilever in 2000 for \$326 million, with an understanding that the commitment to sustainability would continue.

So Ben and Jerry's is not a little green factory in Vermont where two bearded longhairs slave over frozen vats, churning milk into product. It is a brand sold by a giant corporation that sources product with an eye on cost and desire for profit. Such practices put you in the cross-hairs of radical activists like the OCA.

**Ben and Jerry's**



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New York Times · Jul 25, 2017

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**Report shows samples of Ben & Jerry's ice cream contain traces of herbicide ingredient**

This is what radical activist groups wanted. “Carcinogenic pesticide found”. Even if there was nothing found and even if it is not carcinogenic, the association has been established.

**OCA’s CONSPIRATORIAL TAKEDOWN.** An organization called [Regeneration Vermont](#) has criticized Ben and Jerry’s for a long time, claiming that their sourcing of milk from “industrial” sources causes pollution in Vermont’s Lake Champlain waters. They allege animal cruelty, worker harm, and damage to small dairies that have to sell milk at low wholesale prices caused by too much production.

They demanded that Ben and Jerry’s source milk from organic-fed cows and stop “greenwashing” efforts,

which some feel are disingenuous coming from a giant corporation. Look at the hash tag #DirtyDairy.

Now get OCA to finance “tests” from a questionable lab that didn’t furnish testing information (I requested it, didn’t get it yet) and hand a non-scientific report to a reporter that doesn’t understand science, get it in the *New York Times*, and you have the perfect assassination of the targeted brand.



## Tell Ben & Jerry's CEO Jostein Solheim, aka Scooper Man: 'Roundup-Ready' Ice Cream is not 'natural,' or 'socially responsible.' Go Organic!

It's official. Ten of 11 samples of Ben & Jerry's ice cream tested positive for glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup herbicide.

It's the latest in a long line of complaints against the ice cream brand that claims its social mission “seeks to meet human needs and eliminate the injustices in our local, national and international communities,” and that its focus is “on children and families, the environment and sustainable agriculture on family farms.”



**TAKE ACTION:** Tell Ben & Jerry's CEO Jostein Solheim (aka Scooper Man): Roundup-Ready Ice Cream is neither 'natural' nor 'socially responsible.' Go 100% Organic! Fill in the form on this page or text 'dirtydairy' to 97779 to sign.

After you sign the petition, call Ben & Jerry's (802-846-1500) and ask the company to stop greenwashing and go organic. Then post on Ben & Jerry's [Facebook page](#) and [tweet this](#).

### Take Action:

First Name\*

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OCA has been trying to get their followers to petition Ben and Jerry's go “Go Organic!” for a long time. When the company failed to take action, OCA and others orchestrated a media-enabled smear campaign.

**The herbicide-in-the-ice-cream claims against Ben and Jerry's are a payback for not complying with activist wishes. [This has been brewing a long time](#). The smear campaign is for not capitulating to activist demands, a clear case of extortion to either do as they say or have your brand targeted and damaged.**

**BEN AND JERRY'S — HOISTED ON THEIR OWN PETARD.** No matter what the science says they can't come out and say that glyphosate is safe and that the levels claimed are inconsequential. For years their representatives have [argued against genetic engineering](#) and use of such products. [They fought vehemently for “GMO” labeling](#) and dismissed science all along the way. They followed the lead of an anti-science movement, and it has come back to now hit them hard.

**IS THIS WHO YOU SUPPORT?** No matter what you feel about Ben and Jerry's, their corporate overlords at Unilever, or their follow through on issues of social responsibility, **is extortion a fair way to create change?**

Activists now have poisoned the reputation of the brand by publishing what appear to be false, misleading or at the most inconsequential data designed to target a product that did not comply with their demands.

This was just a hit piece on a brand that failed to roll over on command, and now Ben and Jerry's is screwed because they can't rely on the science they opposed to push back.

**LIES ARE NOT ETHICAL AGENTS OF CHANGE.** In conclusion, the *New York Times*, OCA, Regeneration Vermont and others conspired to destroy the reputation of Ben and Jerry's, a brand founded on social consciousness, because they were not submitting to activist demands. The penalty — allegations that key off of manufactured controversy around an herbicide in the recent limelight, now apparently showing up in vanishingly small amounts in the product. Worse — there are no data to indicate that tests were even performed and no sense of how the assays were performed.

**CONCLUSION.** Once again we see the morals of these halo-wearing organizations. They stop at nothing to push their agenda, even if it requires hurting others with false information. Please remember that the OCA does not represent the organic industry in general, and that they are simply a radical organization that will stop at nothing to get what they want.

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**A version of this article appeared at Medium as “[Ben, Jerry and the Organic Consumers Association Mafia- Tonight You Sleep with the Phishes](#)” and has been republished here with permission from the author.**