Viewpoint: ‘Enemy of Science’ — Friends of the Earth renews its organic industry-funded campaign against GM crops

In 1969, a fellow who felt that the eugenicist founders of Sierra Club were not militant enough in their war on brown and black people under the guise of ‘population control’ set out to create his own organization. He latched on to the most popular progressive positions of the day – nuclear power etc. – but declared the group to be in opposition to all science.

All while claiming to be “evidence-based.” Redefining “evidence-based” as only embracing “studies” – which means computer simulations, dead mice papers, and suspect epidemiological claims by political insiders – that match their ideological agenda is why Friends of The Earth is lying to poor Mexican people. The group is claiming that genetic engineering – but only genetic engineering that came after Mutagenesis, which is used by the “organic food” corporations that fund Friends of the Earth – “poses serious health risks” to Mexicans.

How? Does Friends of the Earth think Mexicans are a different species? A trillion animals and 2 billion people have eaten “GMOs” (the term they use for all post-mutagenesis food despite GMOs being only one off-patent technology) and there are no health issues. Here is their latest headline:

High Levels of Genetically Engineered Toxins and Glyphosate in GMO Corn Pose Serious Health Risks in Mexico

Do you believe plants are little people and that every scientist and Democratic President since Roosevelt has been colluding with corporations to poison you? Then you’re ready to donate to Friends of the Earth or be on a San Francisco jury!

Their newest assault on science manipulates the process of science for emotional effect.

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1. FOE says safety studies are “industry assertions”, not science

This conspiracy theory actually works with coastal progressives and Whole Foods shoppers nationwide but like all conspiracy theories has trouble making real-world sense. FDA and EPA employees are 90 percent Democrats and the left-wing are the only people who donate to Friends of the Earth so we have to believe the left-wing is duped by corporations – if they are scientists in government.

Science is science, the belief system of anti-science hippies does not change reality. But it can impact people in Mexico who are poor. Like in the Philippines with Golden Rice or Sri Lanka with all organic food, they target the least-educated in their war on science and do not care how many people they harm or kill.
In the real world, scientists in government agencies are exceedingly over-cautious, but activists have begun to get their allied epidemiologists hired into the Biden administration, and believe their war of extinction on science will succeed if biology, toxicology and chemistry are ignored and statistical ‘correlation’ makes science policy.

2. Companies are required by law to pay for studies to prove science is safe, but FOE claims that is “industry-funded.”

Should a company be allowed to create a product and hand it off to the government and declare that taxpayers have to pay to prove it does not work?

Of course not, but Friends of the Earth claims this stuff and gullible Mother Jones and Washington Post journalists repeat it as if it were a real argument. Those studies have to pass by the most critical government scientists out there, many of whom have been in three of four administrations by now.

All studies are “industry-funded” by law, and that is a good thing. The government should force companies to prove products are safe.

3. The “scientist” they quote is just a PhD in environmental policy

From Berkeley, the university that also claimed weedkillers turns frogs gay. There is nothing at all wrong with the humanities, and FOE can give a “scientist” title to anyone they want, but let’s not pretend that FOE isn’t as sexist as every other environmental group and hiring young progressive women because they are true believers who will therefore accept a lower salary. American Association of University Women data found that environmentalists are the most sexist group in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields, paying women only 79% of what men get.

Their policy expert has a few op-eds in pay-to-publish outlets like the Guardian claiming predictable anti-science fluff like that “neonics” are toxic to humans and that if a hand-picked lab can’t ‘detect’ organic pesticides in urine then the companies that fund FOE must be better for health.

4. The co-author on this claim is discredited organic industry flunky Chuck Benbrook

Benbrook is famous for writing papers like that organic strawberries are healthier – but looking at his methodology his only data was they have better ‘mouth feel’ according to organic shoppers on surveys. He is derided in science circles because he is a known liar. For example, he claimed to be a “教授” at Washington State University but was only an Adjunct and the school terminated his contract when we exposed that an organic food company was paying the university to pay him.

The U.S. government has not presented an ‘appropriate’ risk assessment to the tribunal as
called for in the USMCA dispute because such an assessment has never been done in the U.S. or anywhere in the world.

— Co-author Dr. Charles Benbrook

Like vaccines, cell phones, and Israel defending itself against terrorists, anti-science progressives use ‘needs more study’ to block any product made by any company that isn’t giving them money. Benbrook understands none of the science in how products are approved, he wants ‘risk assessment’ because it instead only using food surveys – like organic food shoppers who claim they get a rash if they don’t use non-GMO rock salt.

Now Benbrook is a professional “pesticide litigation consultant” for lawyers hoping to sue companies using papers like this FOE conspiracy screed.

5. Their only data consists of “emerging evidence.”

Like “suggests”, this is a word that statisticians use when they want to create an appearance of legitimacy, but it means nothing except that the finding is not science.

While much of the focus of the health harms of GMO corn rightfully center on glyphosate and other hazardous herbicides that the crops have been engineered to withstand, emerging evidence on these toxins is concerning. Data show the potential for risk of adverse impacts on the human microbiome and GI tract, risks of allergenicity stimulating an immune system response “as potent as that elicited by cholera toxin,” and presence of antibodies against Cry toxins in at least 8% of Americans, clear evidence that the toxin remains mostly intact after passing through the human GI tract.

Illiterate 17th century peasants who had no fertilizers or pesticides could still not get a job at FOE – because they knew ‘the dose makes the poison’ while FOE believes 1 part per quadrillion is killing people, despite science knowing that is impossible.

Environmental groups are famous for soliciting an author to ‘write’ an epidemiology paper – basically, get a grad student to look at other hand-picked epidemiology papers and create enough correlation to claim the scientifically meaningless “statistical significance” – where the conclusion will be a chemical they want to sue over is bad. Then they get other authors to write supporting papers citing the first, and then they use that pool of papers to claim their entirely manufactured claim is “emerging evidence.”

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