



'Dark Forces'

In his article, "'Dark Forces' Are Coming for Your Organic Food," published in *Mother Jones* this week, Tom Philpott exposed a proposal by the House Freedom Caucus to abolish a long list of government programs, including the USDA's National Organic Program.

But on closer look, the notoriously conservative Freedom Caucus isn't the only "dark force" plotting to weaken the organic food sector. And it's not just organic food, but a whole host of food safety and environmental regulations, that Trump Administration "dark forces" are coming after.

From Ronnie's latest blog post: "Now organic consumers and farmers find ourselves facing Donald Trump and his Agribusiness/Fossil Fuel 'Swamp Cabinet,' aided and abetted by a Republican (and status quo Democrat)-controlled Congress and an army of corporate lobbyists, fracking and pipeline extremists, militarists, racists, and misogynists. If we thought the 'O'Bummer' administration and the Hillary campaign were disappointing, get ready for what food writer Tom Philpott calls the "Dark Forces" of the Trump Administration." orgcns.org/2l6oLYB

'Quite Scary'

Pesticides are bad for kids' brains. That's not news to most of us. But a new report prepared for the European Parliament, co-authored by Harvard Chan School's Philippe Grandjean, adjunct professor of environmental health, confirms it, once again: If health is a priority for you, and especially for your children, make your way to the organic section in your supermarket.

From an article published on the Harvard School of Public Health website: "Authorities in both the European Union and the United States insist that current limits on the amount of pesticides in conventional produce are adequate to ensure that it's perfectly safe. But those limits are based on animal studies, looking at the effect of one pesticide at a time. The human brain is so much more complex than the rat brain, and our brain development is much more vulnerable because there are so many processes that have to happen at the right time and in the right sequence—you can't go back and do them over.

Three long-term birth cohort studies in the U.S. suggest that pesticides are harming children's brains. In these studies, researchers found that women's exposure to pesticides during pregnancy, measured through urine samples, was associated with negative impacts on their children's IQ and neurobehavioral development, as well as with ADHD [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder] diagnoses. Also, one of the studies looked at structural brain growth using magnetic resonance imaging and found that the gray matter was thinner in children the higher their mothers' exposure to organophosphates, which are used widely in pesticides. I think that's quite scary." Scary, indeed. Especially in the U.S., where the government agencies charged with keeping our food safe could soon be gutted. orgcns.org/2kSPUDr



Biting Back

The GMO Arctic Apple may be headed to a grocery store near you this week. The apples will supposedly bear a label identifying the brand (Arctic). But they won't have a label that says "GMO." You can thank Congress and its DARK Act, for that.

Our allies at Friends of the Earth have done some sleuthing. They don't know exactly which stores are guilty of using consumers as GMO apple guinea pigs, but they do know that 10 grocery stores in the Midwest are quietly testing packages of sliced GMO apples to see if consumers "bite."

The GMO apple uses an experimental, unregulated technique called RNA interference that keeps the apple from turning brown after it's been sliced. Scientists say this process may have negative unintended impacts on human health and the environment. Who stands to benefit from the GMO apple? Not consumers like you. Definitely not apple growers, who have opposed this apple all along. The Arctic Apple benefits no one except Intrexon, the synthetic biology company that now owns the GMO salmon, the GMO mosquito and the GMO apple.

You can help disrupt the market for these apples. But we need you to act now during this trial run in grocery stores. Please sign our petition to grocery store CEOs asking them to reject Intrexon's GMO apple. We'll deliver the petition to the CEOs of big grocery chains, such as Costco, Albertsons, Safeway, Target, Walmart, and Trader Joe's. If you live in the Midwest, please help us identify stores that are already selling GMO apples. Take Action: orgcns.org/2kpGWJO

Live in the Midwest? Help us find the stores selling GMO apples: orgcns.org/2kDByUp

Puzzling Prohibition

In the 1940s, hemp farmers were considered "patriotic supporters" of the war effort. But in 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the Controlled Substances Act, making it illegal to grow industrial hemp. Thanks to that law—which mistakenly lumps industrial hemp in with marijuana—U.S. consumers can buy hemp seeds at our health food stores, or hemp building materials from building suppliers, or clothes made from hemp. But U.S. farmers face a jail sentence for growing the type of hemp used to make those products. Americans bought more than \$600 million worth of hemp products in 2016. Almost all those products were imported from Europe, China or Canada. Because what was once a dominant, lucrative and largely sustainably grown crop here in the U.S., is now outlawed.

Congress has two bipartisan bills which would bring back hemp farming and create rural jobs. A White House petition asking the Trump Administration to pass these laws is nearing the critical 100,000 signatures mark. We need just north of 12,000 more signatures by February 19 to force the White House to respond.

Take Action: orgcns.org/2jSgXel

Calling All Regenerators!

Are you working on an innovative regeneration project? OCA's Regeneration International (RI) project will award a \$1000 grant to five innovative, scalable and replicable regeneration projects that register on RHUB before March 31. Grantees will connect with experts to help support their projects and they'll be featured on RI's website. To qualify, register your project on the RHUB and complete your project profile. RI is also seeking regeneration leaders to help lead the way in increasing the spread and adoption of regenerative solutions in their regions, anywhere in the world. Learn more about the micro-grants: orgcns.org/2ghcCTS

Register your project: orgcns.org/2lMxC7H

Email info@regenerationhub.co to learn more.

Support OCA's Regeneration International Project: orgcns.org/1PIoNM4