

WikiLeaks Reveals Hillary Clinton Campaign Manager John Podesta Believes GMOs Cause Migraines



By Alex Berezow — October 12, 2016



Credit: Wikipedia ^[1]

John Podesta, campaign manager and a close advisor to Hillary Clinton, [believes](#) ^[2] the government has not divulged everything it knows about UFOs and Area 51. Given his predilection for conspiratorial beliefs, it probably shouldn't come as a surprise that he has a fear of biotechnology.

WikiLeaks has made public thousands of Mrs. Clinton's emails. Normally, a politician's campaign machinations would not be of interest to ACSH. However, Stephan Neidenbach, purveyor of the website [We Love GMOs and Vaccines](#) ^[3], combed through the emails and discovered that certain influential members of the Clinton campaign hold pseudoscientific beliefs about GMOs. The campaign also consults with people who have a financial stake in promoting anti-GMO propaganda.

For instance, in the email shown below, Mr. Podesta is responding to a colleague who has a migraine. His misguided medical advice is to "cut out the gmo's".

From: john.podesta@gmail.com
To: mfisher@hillaryclinton.com
Date: 2015-11-09 16:58
Subject: Re: Upstairs at urgent care!

No worries. Take care of yourself and cut out the gmo's.

On Monday, November 9, 2015, Milia Fisher
<mfisher@hillaryclinton.com>
wrote:

> I'm on day four with this migraine and I think I need the emergency
> headache shot to put it to rest. Just upstairs on the 18th fl if
you need
> anything. Shouldn't take more than 45 minutes.

Other emails show members of Clinton's campaign team collaborating with groups that have a financial interest in promoting pseudoscience. In one email, Gary Hirshberg, who co-founded a company that peddles organic, GMO-free yogurt, is providing the Clinton campaign with science policy advice. (There are formatting issues in the document, which can be accessed [here](#) [4]. The error-free text is copied below, with emphasis added.)

*In the midst of my travels, I saw press coverage of HRC's last visit to Keene where she was, not surprisingly, asked about her views on GMO's. Her response, if you did not see it, was that she thinks GMO's need more independent testing. I of course agree with this, but honestly this is not a very good position or response for her for two reasons: 1) As evidenced by the Republican?orchestrated testimony at the hearing on Weds, **there is a generally strong, albeit probably not correct consensus among scientists and policy people that GMO's are safe. Hillary is right that this consensus has resulted almost entirely from industry?funded research** and as Kirsten Gillibrand pointed out in the Hearing, **our Own FDA merely rubber stamps or affirms the chemical company's findings**, rather than*

conduct their own independent research.

Mr. Hirshberg is wrong. The consensus among scientists on GMOs is correct. An absolutely [massive review](#) ^[5] of 1,783 documents by a team of Italian agricultural scientists and policy analysts shows that GMOs are safe. Of course, Mr. Hirshberg will not be persuaded by the overwhelming data. He has GMO-free yogurt to sell.

Mr. Hirshberg is correct that the FDA does not perform its own research. That is because it is a government bureaucracy, not a laboratory, so it is not equipped to do so. Pharmaceutical, chemical, and biotech companies submit safety data, and the FDA scours it for flaws. It is a flat-out lie that the FDA simply "rubber stamps" safety data. If that was actually true, then why does it take 10 years for the average drug to make it to the marketplace? Additionally, falsifying data can make a company vulnerable to gigantic lawsuits and/or land people in prison.

Another [email](#) ^[6] shows the campaign receiving advice from Michael Hansen, who works for the thoroughly discredited anti-GMO organization U.S. Right to Know.

Given the outrageous nature of the 2016 election, this might seem like the tiniest of controversies. But this story matters for at least three major reasons.

First, as campaign manager, Mr. Podesta will become an influential policy advisor in the White House. It is bad for the scientific community, and America as a whole, to have a person who embraces conspiracies and rejects data helping formulate science and health policy.

Second, though it is unfortunately common, it is deeply unwise and unethical for politicians to be coordinating campaign strategies with activists who will then later help craft policy. It constitutes an unacceptable conflict of interest.

Third, many science journalists would freak out if they learned that a senior advisor to a presidential candidate was a creationist or climate change skeptic. That same level of scrutiny ought to be applied to UFO-accepting, GMO deniers.

It is time to hold Mr. Podesta's feet to the fire.

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Links

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Podesta#/media/File:John_Podesta.jpg

[2] <http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/07/politics/john-podesta-hillary-clinton-ufo/>

[3] <http://welovegv.com/>

[4] <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzJRuradOU1aYXZXOF9UTjIRZEU/view?ts=57fd484a>

[5] <http://www.realclearscience.com/blog/2013/10/massive-review-reveals-consensus-on-gmo-safety.html>

[6] <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzJRuradOU1aQTZiTWxuRIJxLU0/view?ts=57fd484a>