How Cargill Ruined Its Reputation in a Single Tweet

By Alex Berezow — March 23, 2017

Credit: Shutterstock [1]

Reputations are a funny thing. It takes years to build them but mere seconds to destroy them.

Cargill, a company that provides all manner of agricultural products and services, has managed to ruin its reputation with farmers and science writers in a single tweet. On March 17, the company announced its partnership with the thoroughly wretched Non-GMO Project*, an anti-biotech organization that sticks a goofy "non-GMO verified" label on everything from water to kitty litter [2].

Here's the tweet:
And the flood gates swung open wide. The backlash was swift, brutal, and effective.

*Suzanne Rutherford* @s_l_rutherford · 24h

It’s always been about market share, @Cargill, not food safety. The @NonGMOProject agenda is clear: to harm farmers like me. #FactsNotFear
Ben Schaefer Retweeted

Simon Ellis @FarmLifeMB · 2h

@Cargill supplying both GM and non-GM products is fine. Market demand is there. Supporting and paying a company that uses false info is not.

Julie Kelly Retweeted

Vahid L Aidun @vahidaidun · 3h

Whoa @Cargill, if your goal was to unite & activate the #ag community to #standupforscience ...you're absolutely crushed it!

Cargill @Cargill

“We work closely with the #NonGMO Project & hope to have even more Cargill ingredients verified in the near future” bit.ly/2mzWjQO

Greg Hockaday @GregHockaday1 · 10h

I regarded @Cargill as an industry leader with uncompromising integrity. Disappointed to see them throw science/farmers under the bus for $. 

Robert Saik, PAg,CAC @rsaik · 11h
#Farmers; ask WHY @Cargill supports fear-mongering, @NonGMOproject?

Need to #standupforscience not #backdowntofear of #GMO

This hurts #Ag

Cargill @Cargill

“We work closely with the #NonGMO Project & hope to have even more Cargill ingredients verified in the near future” bit.ly/2mzWjQO

Non-GMO Project
11 mins · 0

#GMO feeding studies across the world have presented alarming results.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) – Planned Sterilization of Humanity?
globalresearch.ca

highheels&fields @lesleyraekelly · 12h

Hey @Cargill. We’re proud to deliver our #GMO canola and non-GMO crops to a location NOT near you.

Too bad you teamed up w/ @NonGMOProject
Lawrence McLachlan @LMcLachlan60 · 10h
At this moment tens of thousands of farmers around the world are wondering
WTF were you thinking @Cargill

Cargill @Cargill

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Cargill ingredients verified in the near future” bit.ly/2mzWjQO

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In full-blown damage control, the company's Twitter page has been rather busy. It rushed out a statement that said that the company didn't agree with what the Non-GMO Project stands for, but partnered with them anyway because consumers wanted it. In other words, they admitted that it was about money, not science.

That didn't go over well.

@Cargill You're literally paying money to a group which lies about your products and slanders farmers.

@Cargill you can't be both pro-GM and non-GMO at the same time.
Time will tell if insulting some of their biggest customers and business partners is a sound strategy for Cargill.

*Note: See this new article [4] by Stephan Neidenbach for more information on the Non-GMO Project.

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Links
[2] https://twitter.com/LeahMcGrathRD/status/844672610940207105
[3] https://twitter.com/Cargill/status/845020314446823424
[4] https://medium.com/@welovegv/why-is-cargill-now-funding-the-anti-gmo-movement-3edcc7fa2a69#.bi1z4o8jb