

Truth In Aging, We Invade Washington, And More Outreach This Week



By Hank Campbell — June 19, 2017



1. **"Democracy Dies In Darkness"** - that is the tagline for the *Washington Post* these days. And yet they promote darkness about science. Last Tuesday [they were hosting a panel](#) [1] on "how science and technology are changing our food systems", yet what did they leave out? Anyone who knows anything about science or technology and food.

Instead, it was mostly organic salespeople and scaremongers.

- Ken Cook, President and Co-founder, Environmental Working Group
- Seth Goldman, Co-founder, Honest Tea
- Evan Lutz, Chief Executive Officer & Co-founder, Hungry Harvest
- Dr. Marty Matlock, Executive Director, Office of Sustainability: University of Arkansas

There was a great deal of Internet objection to this obvious spin, a number of science advocates tried to get me on the panel. *Washington Post* refused to have an evidence-based counterpoint to Ken Cook, though. Their only concession was being willing to put a marketing person for a pesticide company on the panel.

Yeah, that is shining a light on truth all right, *Washington Post*.

The panel was sponsored by Bayer, yet anti-science activists strangely did not object to *that corporate funding*. And why would Bayer pay money for this? In the age of marketing-driven

"corporate responsibility", where companies essentially apologize for being in business at all, this may have seemed like a good idea. Guess what, Bayer marketing? Environmental Working Group was created by Tides Foundation to hate you and other companies, they sue and lobby and scaremonger to promote doubt about science and technology, sponsoring a panel of environmental fifth columnists won't change that. Ken Cook has made millions doing it, he is not stopping now.

A few days later it was announced that the owner of the *Washington Post* had just bought Whole Foods, so maybe the refusal to include any science and make its panel an organic process love fest was just creating some corporate synergy.

2. While we recognize a number of agencies during the Obama administration lost their way scientifically, USDA did not, at least when it comes to modernizing food approval, **and in the *Chicago Tribune* I outlined what their proposed changes are for approval of genetically optimized foods** [2] and why the Trump administration should implement them even though they were created during the Obama years.

These are good guidelines **and public comments close today** [3]. About 4 of the comments so far are not ridiculous anti-science diatribes so please add your thoughts.

3. ***Truth In Aging* wanted to shine some actual light of truth** on the hydrogen water fad and whether or not it could boost mitochondria, the energy factories inside most of our cells, and therefore increase longevity, so **they quoted** [4] our Dr. Ruth Kava: It's "total hooey." Some people love magic water, that is why homeopathy is still around despite 200 years of never doing anything, but this is no different than alkaline water or asparagus water or anything else that claims undefined health benefits at high cost. Water has hydrogen, adding some more will not cause it to somehow invade the barrier in mitochondria that prevent health fads and supplements from doing anything harmful.

4. **Huffington Post**, the favored outlet for political miscreants who can't get published in real media, will let anyone write there. And they showed it again by carrying **a conspiratorial rant by the organic industry sock puppet group US Right To Know**, the 27th favorite environmental propaganda site of the Kremlin, who are clearly panicking about the documentary "Food Evolution."

Are you in New York City? Want a free ticket and an ACSH t-shirt to wear to the premiere June 23rd? Send me an email.



"Food Evolution" discusses the benefits of science in agriculture. Marketing types at Organic Consumers Association must be threatening to pull the corporate funding from USRTK if they don't get it banned because they took to the only place that will publish them - [a blog](#) ^[5](naturally) - to whine about it. Maybe Huffington Post gets paid to let their ill-informed mommy bloggers ramble there because it's a mishmash of 'science is a conservative conspiracy' hysteria mixed with uninformed paranoia about our food supply:

"We have no evidence, but it is a conspiracy by Monsanto."

They could stop at "We have no evidence" on any topic related to science or food.

5. Meanwhile, other environmental activists are scrambling to distance themselves from Organic Consumers Association after they paid so much to promote lawsuits in California over the finding by the International Agency for Research on Cancer that the pesticide glyphosate was a probable carcinogen. Under oath, the chair of the working group admitted he suppressed evidence that would have changed their result.

The admission was so damning even Mother Jones turned on them. **When even Mother Jones defends science, you know it can't be denied.**

The problem is what I noted in 2016 [and recently invoked by Crop Protection News](#) ^[6] when they flip-flopped on coffee using the same junk science methods: "Its reasons to reverse course on coffee are no more valid than its reason to have declared it possibly carcinogenic to humans in the first place...And the coffee claims are no more valid than any other claims the agency has made about the hazards of common things."

6. The EPA's Scientific Integrity Official, Dr. Francesca Grifo, a non-scientist plucked from the activist throng at Union of Concerned Scientists as a reward for their political good work campaigning against President Bush and Senator John McCain and Governore Mitt Romney, **canceled a meeting on scientific integrity** when Myron Ebell of CEI, a team from Heartland Institute, a group of academics and I decided to attend and ask some awkward questions about scientific integrity at EPA. Like why EPA buys influence by giving hundreds of millions of dollars

each year in taxpayer money to select nonprofit organizations - non-profits like the one Grifo came from.

The EPA meeting never took place but I finally got a chance to meet Heartland's Dr. Jay Lehr in person, thanks to a panel on science communication put together by their President Joe Bast, who has been at Heartland for 33 years (but doesn't look like he could have done anything for that long.) I knew Dr. Lehr was arguably the fittest 81-year-old in the science arena but this picture sure proved it. He looks like he could bench press me.

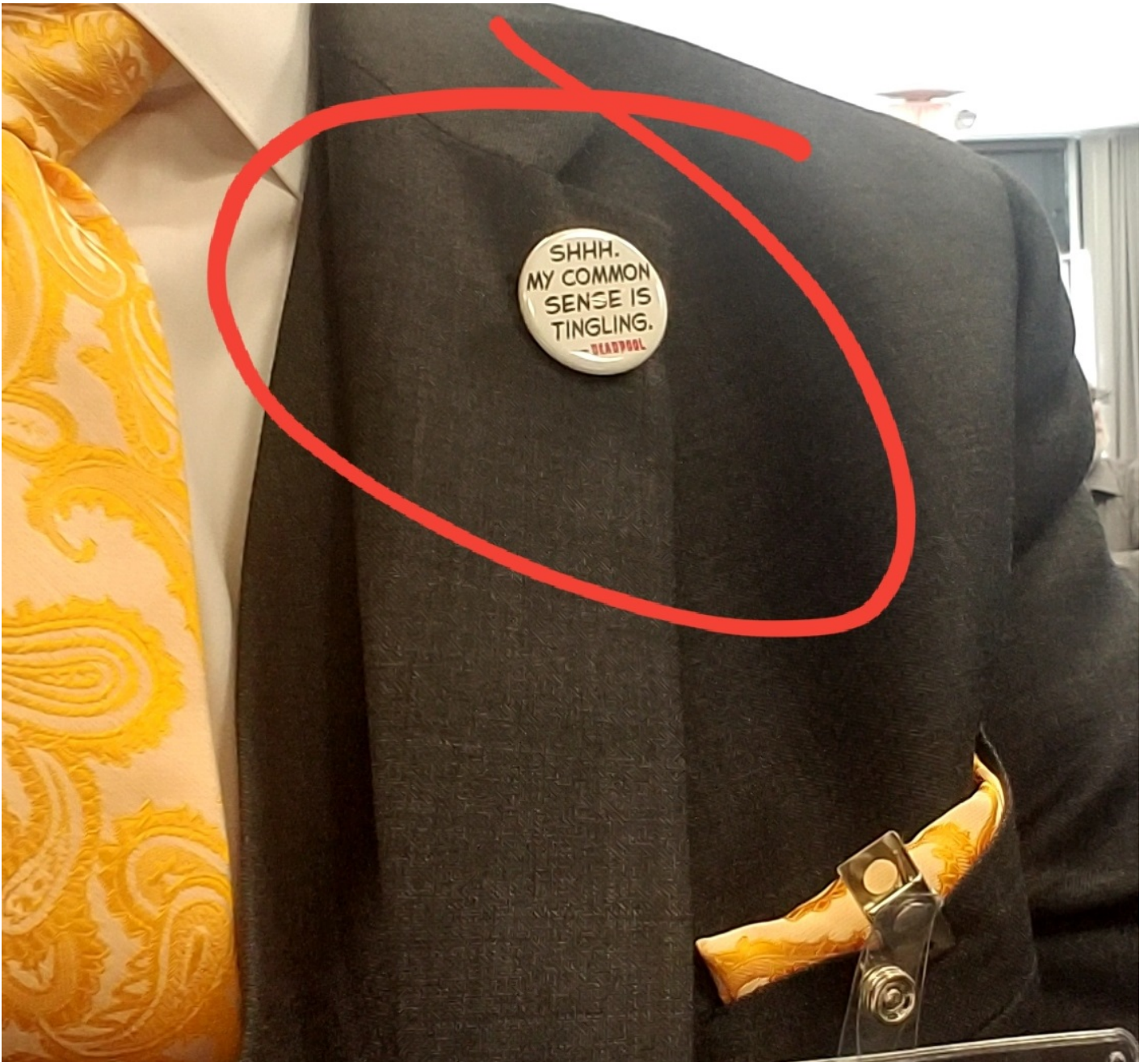


7. While Washington Post and EPA were not much help when it comes to promoting evidence-based thinking, **one group we all know cares about science and technology is CropLife America.** From the moment I came to ACSH, CEO Jay Vroom and his team have been supportive of our work so whenever I can attend one of their agriculture outreach events, especially where ag media, staffers in Congressional ag districts, and the pro-science community can get together informally to talk about things, I am going. They had an event the evening after I got to meet Jay and Joe and Myron and more to talk about how to talk about science.

CropLife did not disappoint. I had wondered if the city might be on lockdown, because this was the evening after GOP House Whip Steve Scalise and three others were shot by an irate Bernie Sanders supporter. But while security at the Capitol took a little longer to get through, D.C. carried on.

A lot of what we talked about was common sense when people really understood how food was made. Today, 2 percent of Americans grow food while the other 98 percent claim to be policy experts on it, so we have a culture where a \$100 billion industry has convinced buyers if they don't purchase organic food their kid won't get into college. I was the only one wearing this pin in a Senate meeting room that evening, I can tell you, but everyone who tries to communicate science

versus environmental scaremongering thinks it.



8. To cap off the week, I attended a drug pricing roundtable with other advocacy groups at the Pfizer offices in D.C. to talk about the complexities of drug costs. This may sound like an odd meeting for them to host, since clearly Pfizer and others in the industry benefit the most financially from the status quo, and so I asked the awkward question donors would ask, and want me to ask; *if companies could not charge less in Canada and Europe, would prices for Americans go down?*

I obviously believe we want to continue to lead the world in science, and that includes pharmaceutical discovery, and we have written dozens of times about how difficult successful drug development is - you can do the arithmetic, take the amount a company spends on R&D and divide it by the number of new products each year, and you can see it's billions in sunk costs - but the issue becomes whether or not we want to subsidize the rest of the world. Single-payer countries have caps and America does not. So what if we all had caps?

It's a tough question to really answer. The price disparity that gets media attention is patented

drugs. But America is instead buying 85 percent generic drugs and those are cheaper here than in Europe and Canada. And the list price of a drug is really irrelevant, all people care about is their co-pay. Likewise most people who need patented drugs are older, and if they have Medicare Part D, a few exceptions here and there aside, patented drugs are not cheaper elsewhere. That's why we don't see pictures and video of buses full of senior citizens going to Canada to buy drugs any more.

Then there is the higher taxes people pay in order to have single-payer health care.

Health care *has* ballooned in cost since the 1960s, 1400 percent, which is way more than inflation, but the cost in other health care services has gone up 40 percent more than prescription drugs. Can legislation really fix that? I don't know, but the Trump administration is having a meeting to discuss that very topic so we'll see if they also recognize the complexity of a solution or if it's just going to be a political statement.

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/06/19/truth-aging-we-invade-washington-and-more-outreach-week-11438>

Links

[1] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/pr/wp/2017/06/08/the-washington-post-hosts-transformers-food/?source=acsh.org>

[2] <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-gmo-science-policy-trump-perspec-0612-md-20170611-story.html?source=acsh.org>

[3] https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/SA_By_Date/SA-2017/SA-02/biotech-rule-revision-comments

[4] <https://www.truthinaging.com/review/hydrogen-water-for-healthier-skin?source=acsh.org>

[5] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/food-evolution-gmo-film-showcases-chemical-industry_us_5942b09ce4b024b7e0df49db?source=acsh.org

[6] <http://cropprotectionnews.com/stories/511129168-iarc-taking-heat-from-unlikely-sources-over-glyphosate-claims?source=acsh.org>