

Anti-GMO Advocate Gives Another Anti-GMO Advocate A Glowing Review



By *Hank Campbell* — November 9, 2015

David Katz, [who has consistently invoked the precautionary principle about GMOs](#) [1] despite the overwhelming science consensus, [has some nice things to say about Dr. Marion Nestle's latest effort](#) [2] on food. He appreciates her disdain for the Clinton Foundation, the American Heart Association, and apparently...me.

Well, perhaps there is a reason he would have disdain for that last one. He is a [friend of Dr. Oz](#) [3] and so might be happy Nestle criticizes the organization that had the most to do with getting him to put Dr. in tiny letters in the title of his show, to stop endorsing miracle cures, and to engage in the pretense of hiring a fact checker - the folks here at [the American Council on Science and Health](#) [4].

But Nestle may need a fact checker as much as Oz. Katz specially notes in his review that she claims the Council depends heavily on funding from corporations that have a financial stake in the scientific debate it aims to shape and that Coca-Cola is a significant sponsor.

Well, if that is the extent of her research there isn't much point in reading anything else in the book. [It's a "Google University" claim](#) [5] and not serious scholarship.(1) Basically, she suggests that anyone who gets any corporate funding can't be ethical (except the groups she Google searched to undermine our science outreach work, who get plenty of corporate money) but, if we are being honest, serious scientists in both the corporate and academic world don't think much of her either.

I don't know if Nestle was born part of the 1% - a silver spoon would explain her organic food fetish - but if she was not, then she also "depends heavily on funding from corporations", she just rationalizes that it has been laundered, the same way activist groups use foundations to launder money from corporations, or academic scholars can rationalize that funding from the government means they are "independent."

Sorry, Marion, you are not independent. But neither are we or anyone else, unless it is someone who never needs money. The distinction is that we are honest about it and take steps to make sure it doesn't create bias, and clearly Nestle does not.

But claiming we are for sale, ironically due to honesty about funding, is a caricature bordering on childish. In the real world, scientists are expensive. Despite that, it is well known that the Council does not take grants with riders attached. And Coca-Cola was never a "significant sponsor" - years ago we were quite literally a drop in their science outreach budget, which covered \$120 million. Before Katz's review even came out, [I had already detailed how much money Coke gave to the Council](#) [6] so it makes her work look sloppy, and his endorsement of it without any critical thinking, look even sloppier - or just a favor for a friend to game Internet search algorithms, which anti-science groups have mastered quite nicely. The actual evidence showed that funding made no

difference at all in the Council's science and health discussions of soda.

The Boston Red Sox baseball team received about as much money as we did. Did all of the Red Sox players give up on Dr. Pepper or whatever and gush about Coke as a result? Of course not, but to Nestle it must be so, because only she gets a paycheck and remains pure ethically. And perhaps her friends that undermine science too.

It's silly, as I wrote earlier.

All funding is welcome, of course, and we will take donations from any company, foundation or individual who wants to send them, but anyone who calls me and asks for *quid pro quo* is getting hung up on and I will instead write an article making fun of them on the Internet for trying.

You know what you won't find if you do serious research instead of this off-hand thing Katz likes? Me being on a list of 'reliable outlets' for corporate-funded groups to promote their undermining of competitors.

Yet that is exactly where you will find Nestle.

DOCUMENT PAGES NOTES

Version # 3 - Updated December 1, 2013

1/20-23/14 - CMB trip to D.C. for AGree meeting, can do PLOS ONE related briefings etc.

The "A" Team of Commentators, Strategists, Influencers

People who are likely to help out with strategic Tweets, comments to media, etc. Can be asked upfront to take defined actions at key time, and play certain roles in specific communities.

Michael Pollan (Chuck, DONE)
Ken Cook (Chuck, DONE)
Melinda Hemmelgarn (Elizabeth/Theresa, initial contact)
Tom Philpott, Mother Earth News (Chuck, DONE)

These individuals will be fully briefed on the paper and provided access to it and associated material on the M2M website by or about 12/2. They will be asked if they would be willing to help assure that the release and outreach effort is broad and on-message. We should ask them to be prepared for media interviews; tweet re the study release, and then again in response to media dialogue and the unfolding discussion of, and reaction to the study's findings. They will also be asked if they would be willing to help, on short notice, with a key strategic tweet or comment, usually on social media.

Nutrition/Science Community

Chris McCullum (DONE, Chuck)
Melinda Hemmelgarn (Contact - Elizabeth and Theresa)
Alan Greene (DONE, Chuck)
Marion Nestle (DONE, Chuck)
Mardi Mellon and Doug Gurian-Sherran (DONE, Chuck)
Susan Roberts (??)
Cindy Daley (DONE, Chuck)
Heather Darby (Contact - Chuck)
Jessica Shade (Contact - Chuck)
Coach Mark Smallwood (Contact - Elizabeth/Theresa)
Dr. Mercola (Melinda/Elizabeth help approach)
Dr. Oz (Contact - Chuck)
Others from Melinda H's list

I am sure Dr. Nestle does not like that inference and will have numerous objections and clarifications to make about it. But Google University claims don't need any fact-checking when she writes, so it would be odd for her to expect them from anyone else.

NOTE:

(1) When your facts come from SourceWatch - run by a political lobbyist who hides her own corporate donations from public view - and *Mother Jones*, a partisan magazine (with an anti-science agenda in line with SourceWatch) it tells us how little effort Nestle really puts into critical thinking. The parent of SourceWatch has taken hundreds of thousands of dollars in "dark money" and their director says she never wondered where it came from. Basically, if pro-science groups acted as malevolently as SourceWatch does, there would be a SourceWatch in opposition that exists only to attack groups against science. But there isn't.

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Links

[1] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-katz-md/genetically-modified-foods_b_912096.html?source=acsh.org

[2] <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v526/n7571/full/526034a.html?source=acsh.org>

[3] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-katz-md/doctor-oz-columbia_b_7108752.html?source=acsh.org

[4] <http://www.acsh.org/>

[5] <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Google+University>

[6] <http://acsh.org/2015/09/coca-cola-transparency-and-science-outreach/>

[7] <http://acsh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Influencers-that-organic-groups-rely-on.jpg>