

The darker side of green: a critical look at organic farming



By James Duncan
Design Editor

We are a people who like to be deceived. We really really do like being lied to, in fact I feel as though so many people's lives would crumble if for just one moment they had to see how in vain everything they try to achieve is. While there are a great many reasons to fear truth, this is really something much smaller. Not life-shattering, but still a lie that so many people love and hold dear to their heart.

Some people today like to say "Organic is better." Just to be cool and trendy.

This is simply a lie. Most people have been told that it tastes better, is more sustainable and is better for the environment than the mega farms that we depend on for food. This is simply not true, with one exception, you grew it yourself or personally know the person

who did, and organic is just another word tacked on things to get people to buy them. Just like multi-vitamins, they are products to take advantage of people who think something is science because they "Read it in a book that one time." Let me break down some of the biggest lies about organic farming.

First that it is better for the environment. It is only so true. I guess when you are choosing the lesser of two evils I would pick the one wearing hemp shoes too, but organic farmers still use dangerous chemicals. Albeit natural, poison is still poison. Let's take Rotenone, for example, this is a common organic pesticide. That like most used in organic farming is never mentioned for fear of ruining their image. This is a natural chemical that has a low impact on pollinators and is considered a safe way of dealing with insect problems. Oh, wait - it's also linked to Parkinson's and is a piscicide (kills fish). This organic pesticide is in fact a broad spectrum poison whose runoff devastates fish populations and is linked to neurological disorders in mammals. While it was outlawed in 2005 for use in organic farming, it is still commonly used. On the other hand, there are some

"evil" genetically modified crops that contain a very small amount of Rotenone naturally through modification of the plant to produce the chemical. Using genetically modified plants there is vastly less runoff and the crops require less pesticide; but I guess fewer chemicals and poisons in the watershed isn't really the point of organic farming. The more one looks at the rather small list of chemicals used in organic farming the more you have to think "Is copper good for eating?" "Does it make sense to support destructive farming practices that dress themselves as beneficial?"

Sustainably, organic farming cannot support or sustain any population of considerable size. Organic farming produces up to 50 percent less overall yield than industrial techniques. According to the World Bank, Earth now plays host to 7,006,919,675 according to the U.S. Census bureau. Think for one minute just how many that is.

"Every day, the equivalent of a major earthquake killing over 30,000 young children occurs to a disturbingly muted response. They die quietly in some of the poorest villages on Earth, far removed from the

scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death." -UNICEF Progress of Nations 2000

Organic farming doesn't solve or even begin to help any of the poorest people on Earth. What can help them and prevent countless deaths is the life-giving power of genetically modified crops. Thanks to organizations like Greenpeace, some of the poorest people in the world aren't allowed to have the nutrient-rich grains they need to eke out a modest existence. Now they want to fight GMO rice ... funny, didn't golden rice, one of the older "GMO" crop, save hundreds of thousands of lives in parts of the world where vitamin A deficiency is common? What will they have to replace this important source of nutrition? Nothing, you say? That's right. When you eat organic food and think "This is a better way to eat" remember the millions of people who would die if organic farming became the majority practice.

Finally, there's taste. I know, I know. "Organic foods taste better and are better for you." Really? You think so? Because science doesn't. In fact, the

majority of double-blind studies have shown that even experienced foodies can't tell the difference. I don't think you can either. That is one interesting thing about humans - we are really gullible. If someone you trust tells you every day that something is better and you finally try it, you are just going to believe it is better. Not because it is, but because you have trained yourself ahead of time to think it will be. Organic isn't better. It's just poorly regulated.

So next time you want to reach for an organic apple, because copper and poison are delicious, remember that it is a first-world luxury that is destructive to the rest of the world. Say it tastes better - fine. Don't act like you are better in any way because you can pay \$2 for an apple at Trader Joe's.

"Man can and must prevent the tragedy of famine in the future instead of merely trying with pious regret to salvage the human wreckage of the famine, as he has so often done in the past."

-Norman Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize winner and pioneer in genetically modified crops.

Board of Education appoints new member

The Clackamas Community College Board of Education is complete. The empty seat left by Charles "Chuck" Clemans because of his untimely passing last year has been filled by Chris Groener. The Board approved his appointment, representing Zone Four, last Wednesday during their monthly meeting.

Groener has attended CCC and is well qualified for the position, according to Jane Reid, board chairperson, in a CCC press release. She also stated that he is a strong and compassionate community leader. Groener currently serves on the Oregon Planning Commission and is a union representative for United Food and Commercial Workers Union. Legislative

experience and a strong grasp of public policy are some of his skills the appointment subcommittee considered when they made their decision.

Clemans passed away in a car accident in December, leaving his position on the board vacant. Groener's appointment ends June 30, 2013 at which time he may run for election to fulfill the remainder of Clemans' term which ends in 2015.

Jo Crenshaw, who currently serves on the CCC Foundation Board of Directors, was the other applicant for the position. She is a local business woman who also has strong ties to the community according to the CCC press release. -Joshua Dillen

GSA alliance at CCC plans two events for Ally Week

The Clackamas Community College Gay/Straight Alliance Club is planning two events for Ally Week, April 23-27.

The Ally Week Kick-Off will be held on Thursday, April 19, from 12-1p.m. in Roger Rook 204. Pizza and pop will be provided, and Bingo cards featuring faculty and staff GSA allies will be given to participants. All students are welcome.

During Ally Week, April 23-26, faculty and staff GSA allies will wear Ally buttons so that participating

students can locate them to have Bingo cards signed.

The Ally Week Celebration will be held on Thursday, April 26, from 12-1p.m. in Rook 204. Dessert will be provided; participants will enter their signed Bingo cards in a raffle for fabulous prizes: three prizes for students and one prize for a faculty or staff member.

What is a GSA faculty/staff ally? An ally is someone who believes all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/

expression, deserve to feel safe and supported while on campus. An ally is not an advocate; rather, an ally helps students feel that they can advocate for themselves. Faculty and staff allies do not need to be part of the LGBTQ community.

For more information, please contact Carol Burnell at carolb@clackamas.edu or ext. 3256, Bruce Simmons at bruces@clackamas.edu or ext. 3332, or Jen Borowczak at jenniferb@clackamas.edu or ext. 3172

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