

'Sound Science' Deception

by Jim Goodman

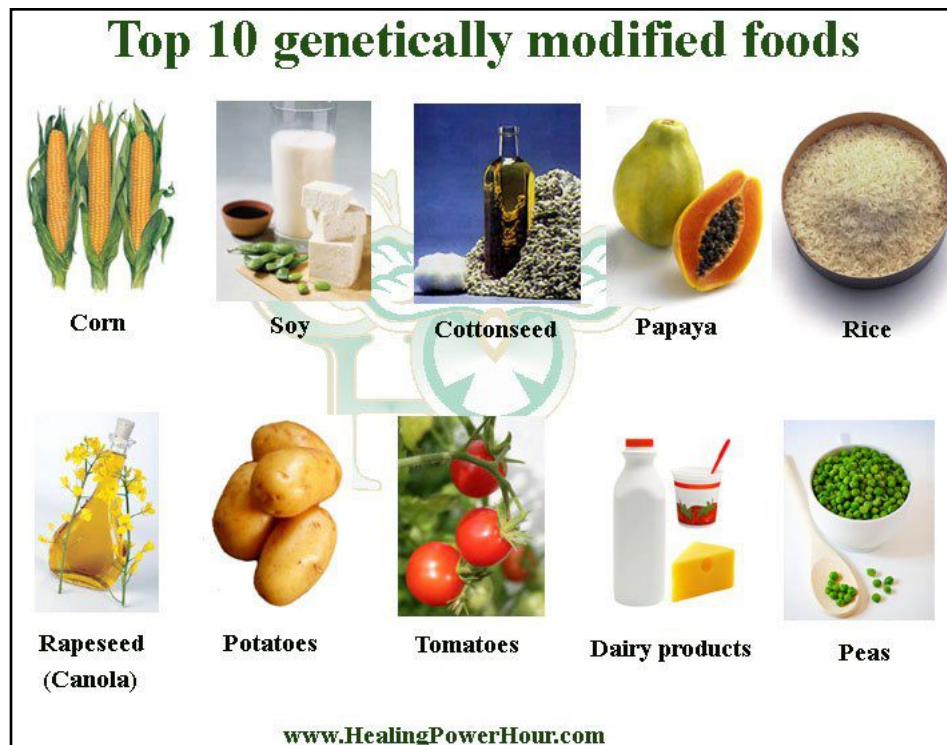
Food is big business everyone eats!

GLOBAL FOOD PRODUCTION IS ABOUT PROFIT. Store shelves are always full. It's cheap, were told it's safe, healthy and suddenly it's sustainable. Sustainable sells.

Sustainable agriculture used to be defined by peasant farmers, by organic farmers—farmers who avoided using pesticides on their crops, farmers who avoided using antibiotics and hormones on their livestock, farmers who relied on integrated farming practices to make their farms regenerative sustainable.

Now, Monsanto bills itself as a leader and innovator in sustainable agriculture. Elanco tells us technology yields sustainability and Elanco president Jeff Simmons tells us that “access to safe, proven, efficiency-enhancing technologies ensures the three rights”—food as a basic human right; choice as a consumer right; and sustainability as an environmental right.

What? Biotechnology giants are standing up for the rights of people and the environment? The same corporations who for decades have ridiculed consumer protests and environmental concerns because their technology, their GMO's (genetically modified organisms), their crop protection chemicals, their seed patents were all based on “sound science?”



But, “sound science” has no scientific definition. It does not mean peer reviewed, or well documented research. “Sound science” is only a term, an ideological term, used to support a particular point of view, policy statement or a technology. “Sound science” is little more than the opinions of so-called “experts” representing corporate interests.

For example, if the public has concerns about the environment, our health or the safety of our food after having been forced to accept scientific advancements like agricultural biotechnology, highly toxic pesticides, or “fracking,” our concerns are blown off because they are not based on “sound science.”

Without doubt, these practices are inherently unsafe, and in the case of GMOs, ineffective as well. In the end, they are of benefit only to the industries that own the technology. And because our society is so afraid of doing anything that might anger industry, or give industry a reason to outsource more jobs, science that does not support industry is not “sound science.”

Simply put, “sound science” always supports the position of industry over people, corporate profit over food safety, the environment and public health. So when someone says something is based on “sound science,” get ready to be duped.

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“Sound science” is really all about deception. It paints a picture that is hard to resist, a story we want to believe. We wanted to believe that smoking was good for us, that nuclear energy was completely safe, that dioxin was not a problem—all stories backed by “Sound Science.”

Farmers wanted to believe that if they bought into the GMO system, they would actually make money, but the dream turned on them. Patented seeds, the cost of fertilizer and chemicals pushed the small farmers out of business, their farms gobbled up by the corn/soy monoculture that made Monsanto, Cargill and all the other multi-national agri-business corporations rich.

Peasant farmers in the global South were pushed off their land, rain forests were cleared to grow more corn and soy and rural communities could no longer feed themselves.

Simmons also tells us that hunger should not be happening in the United States. He is dedicating his life to ensure that everyone has food security. “There is no issue more important in the next seven years than food security. A healthier, more sustainable, more peaceful world is possible. We've talked enough. We have enough technology. Now is the time to act.” So, people are hungry because there is not enough food. “Sound science” and technology are needed to grow more food and the owners of the seed



patents, proprietary chemicals, the grain processors and meat packers will give the technology and food to those who need it,

Sure.

- People are hungry because they are poor and they are poor because the corporate system has outsourced their jobs, ruined their local economy and taken their land away.

- Farmers cannot feed people when seeds are patented and cost more than they are worth.

- Farmers cannot feed people when the crop protection chemicals they must use poison the water and the air.

- Farmers cannot feed people when local markets are destroyed by a global food sys-

tem and when the “sound science” they are told will make them profitable and help them feed the hungry turns out to be a lie.

GMOs are safe and they hold the promise of feeding the world. Really? On very rare occasions the “sound science” gets debunked by those behind the science.

GMOs will not feed the world. “If anyone tells you that GMO is going to feed the world, tell them that it is not... To feed the world takes political and financial will.”

—STEVE SMITH, head of GMO company Novartis Seeds UK (now Syngenta), public meeting on proposed local GMO farm scale trial, Tittleshall, Norfolk, UK, 29 March 2000.