

Stop "for-profit foods", starting with high fructose corn syrup

by Jean Grossholtz



Food security means accessibility to sufficient nutritious, healthy food and to culturally appropriate food. For some years, women fighting the corporate take-over of our planet have worked on the issue of farm subsidies and farm income in World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings and in the World Food Forums conducted during the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

We are committed to bringing about an international trade system that insures that every country can maintain an agricultural system that will provide a local food supply sufficient for their people. We have mobilized against the use of biotechnology to create "for-profit food" that is, food designed to increase the profits of the producer without regard to the nutritional needs of the consumer. We continue our work on of these fronts, challenging the WTO rules and educating people about the claims made for genetically modified foods.

Now we are facing a new issue with respect to the health of foods in the form of a created sugar called high fructose corn syrup. This sweetener is being used in many products as a substitute for other sugars, including in products which were formerly not sweetened. This corn syrup has spread through the food supply in the United States and is moving into the food of other countries as well .

High fructose corn syrup has replaced sugar beet and sugar cane as the sweetener of choice in large transnational food products.

Sugar from corn is easy and cheap to produce. Basically you treat corn with an acid and it becomes sugar. High Fructose Corn Syrup is very stable, retains moisture, doesn't crystallize easily, and mixes well with other ingredients. And, more importantly, it is much cheaper than sucrose.

The United States is the largest producer of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). Most of it is produced by corporations which also receive the majority of farm subsidies. Most of the corn they grow is genetically modified. Such corn cannot find a market in many places in the world, as in the European Union, Uganda, and until recently Brazil, all of which refuse the import of genetically modified products.

The Mexican government's anti-dumping authority determined in 1998 that imports of HFCS from the US were being dumped in the Mexican market, threatening the domestic sugar industry. The U.S. raised objections through a WTO dispute resolution panel, which said Mexico had not made their case for material injury. In September 2000, Mexico again went to the WTO, complying with the earlier WTO findings. However once again they were told that their case did not meet the "anti-

dumping” criteria. HFCS from the United States made from genetically modified corn is moving into Mexico. It has already been determined that some native Mexican corn varieties have been invaded by genetically modified material.

There is an overlapping monopoly involving 6 corporations that control nearly 2/3 of the world’s grain trade. They also have important holdings in seed companies (and genetically modified seeds) and are deeply invested in food products. Because they also control large parts of that processed food system in the United States they have introduced HFCS into many foods, from orange juice to spaghetti sauce.

The product has several drawbacks. Research shows that HFCS can raise triglyceride levels, which may increase the risk of heart disease. In one study a diet with 17 % of energy as fructose raised triglyceride levels in men by 32%[\[1\]](#) Another study by researchers in Hawaii found that fructose rich diets have deleterious metabolic effects, including glucose intolerance, insulin resistance, dyslipidemia and liver dysfunction.[\[2\]](#)

Thirdly, its use undoubtedly contributes to the obesity epidemic in the United States, and fourthly, it is addictive, as are all sugars. This is the reason why children prefer some of the spaghetti products which have high levels of HFCS to homemade spaghetti.

It is no surprise that the largest producer of foods that stock the shelves of US. super markets, foods high in HFCS, is the corporate giant, Philip Morris. This company, you may remember, was also the corporation that knowingly peddled addictive substances in the form of cigarettes. Other major food producers are Nestle, Conagra, and Unilever.

In order to stop this invasion of our food by a non-nutritious addictive substance we must educate consumers to pay attention to what is in their food and to develop boycotts to stop it. It would be a wonderful achievement if we could assure that every living being in the world had access to natural, organically grown and produced foods and was not dependent upon processed foods. However that is presently impossible because the limited availability of organic food and therefore its cost, makes it unavailable for most people. Therefore the campaign must be directed toward removing these substances from food while we continue to campaign for organic, locally grown food. We need to develop a national campaign against the use of fructose corn syrup in food and that means we must build a consumer boycott .

The venue for this of course is the United States and our supermarkets (But I assure you there are products in gourmet food stores with HFCS as well.) In order to stop the spread of this to the rest of the world it must be stopped in the U.S., where the majority of these products are created.

Food Products distributed by Phillip Morris (which has a net worth of \$19.5 billion) include

Kraft foods and its subsidiaries

- Nabisco**
- Callard and Bowser**
- Balance bar**
- Capri Sun**
- Churny Corp**
- Kraft Cheese (Cracker Barrel etc)**
- Life Savers**
- Boca**
- Oscar Mayer**
- Planters**
- Suchard**

Kraft Foods includes

- General Mills**
- Kool-Aid**
- DiGiorno**
- Velveeta**
- Breakstones**
- Philadelphia Cream cheese**
- Baker's Chocolate**
- Calumet Baking Powder**
- Shake and Bake**
- Cream of Wheat**
- Cool Whip**
- Miracle Whip**
- Breyers**
- Oreos**
- Triscuits**
- Toblerone**
- and hundreds of others.**

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[1] (Univ. of Minnesota study) *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* Nov. 2000 and *Journal of Nutrition*, Dec. 2000.

[2] Richard Wasnich, Medical Director, and Jon Ruckle, Associate Medical Director, Radiant Research. Honolulu.