

POP CAMPAIGN POST-ELECTION IMPACT

by Rudi Leonardi and Mikaële Holzer

The grassroots POP Campaign keeps our voices and choices alive and organic food and standards pure—providing a new Consensus Platform for policy-makers and launching a MOMS4POP initiative in 2011. Be involved! Read below and go to POPcampaign.org.

The Climate of Food for 2011— Life After S. 510

It is essential to constantly remind ourselves that the politics of food are driven by the power of self-interest. Too often these interests are profit-driven, with huge appetites for our pocketbooks as their feasts. Well-financed challenges these days are unprecedented, carefully crafted, and massively deployed. Most evident has been the inevitable (as of the time of this article) passage of the Food Safety Bill.

The mid-term change in Congress, with 40% of the Senate and 20% of the House membership considered freshman—and with its growth towards the conservative movement—presented a new stage for fresh perspectives regarding many regulations and restrictions on our food and the price tag exceeding \$1.6 Billion over five years. It was hoped that this change would greatly help health freedom, dietary supplements and food agendas. Yet, the “sweet spots” of food regulation regarding safety, control, and choice restriction was too tempting and bridged the gap between the parties. The food fight continues with bipartisan mouths still chewing on passage issues.

Nevertheless, the POP Campaign will continue to carve out a crucial watchdog role—being defensive, aware of tactics, outbreaks, and orchestrated headlines that will set the stage for public sentiment and reactionary new lawmaking regarding the regulatory process—and offensive, developing

creative strategies such as living, quality organic food educational guidelines for Congressional decision makers, a consensus food platform, and the MOMS4POP initiative (described below). In this manner, with all of us taking a stand together, 2011 can be a pivotal banner year for food quality and dietary supplement freedom on a stage where optimism and effective action play a role, effecting a tipping point toward solid victories.

A Key Driver to Sustainable Action

“Living as if the future matters,” shouted sixteen-year-old high school student Alec Lorz in his speech at the Bioneers Conference in November, 2010, on the iMatter March.

Millions of Americans and people around the globe are taking steps to improve their well-being, life force, and health. This is a force to be acknowledged. Our hunger for the truth about what we put in our mouths is outpacing our appetites for garbage. Organic is becoming more mainstream. We are turning to natural remedies, organic products, living food, and quality lifestyles. Through books like *Supplements Exposed* by Dr. Brian Clement, we are discovering the hidden secrets behind the industry and what we buy. Concerns about the costs of organic food are rising with our demand; yet we continue to insist upon our healthy choices. We seek to express our views at all levels of national, state, local and family governments and

engage in “healthy eating” discussions with everyone we meet.

Clearly, we can no longer stand by and wait—especially with S. 510. Viable solutions still exist. There are options for farmers, suppliers, and consumers. The biggest question we must ask for our children and ourselves is: “Are we living as if the future matters?” If the answer is “yes,” there will always be resolve, answers, and hope.

POP Campaign’s 2011 Proactive Strategies and Initiatives

In the context of passing the Food Safety Bill, there was much discussion and many points of view that were expressed, ultimately defining the instructions of the letter of the law. This is referred to as the spirit of the law and intent of the law. The POP Campaign will play an important role in sifting through Congressional comments on record to find statements that can strengthen positions for food freedom and choice. These foundation-setting statements will be used as markers for keeping the FDA and other regulatory agencies on track in their policy-making throughout the pivotal 2011 year.

One of the primary signals that has been sent with the political change in Washington is acknowledgement of a gap between what constituents want and which direction we’re sailing. Food issues are non-partisan, but the different “food” winds in Congress still must be captured at this high policy making level to navigate our course correctly.



“A game-changer is afoot... it is our renewed appetite for the truth about food that is driving us—we really do know what harms us—sugar, caffeine, alcohol, processed food—and what doesn’t. 2011 is the year to stand up, face these facts, and forge new national food policy guidelines that are not driving us around a blind-curve on a narrow road to extinction.”

—DR. BRIAN CLEMENT

The setting still presents an opportunity to discuss and reframe issues around organic food and healthy supplements, re-surface common sense solutions and options in biocompatible approaches to farming, promote further education and local responsibility of growers, and formulate new laws and policies that support a healthy future and free choice. This is the basic consensus of many of us, with some thoughts below regarding the POP Campaign strategies and issues.

Participating in the Orientation of New Members of Congress

One of the POP Campaign’s main agendas is to provide Congress, especially new members, the knowledge, examples, suggestions, and options so that members can formulate any other food policy related bills or amendments that is truly health-driven and has our interests in mind. For every Member, not just the newly elected, the Congressional policy-making process and the sheer volumes of analyses and bundles of daily documents, complex language, and huge volume of pages of the bills themselves, sometimes thousands of pages, is extremely overwhelming to manage and understand. The self-interests are complex, camouflaged in the grass, and hidden behind crafted language. Decision-making by category and relying upon the research of other legislators and special interests is the only anchor for many legislators—they just cannot do it all or digest most of it. Yes, Congressional indigestion exists!

You can participate with the POP Campaign as a remedy for this indigestion. We propose a consensus Congressional framework document. (Please see the article by Beth Clay, “The Washington Report,” in *Healing Our World* Volume 30, Issue 4 for more

details.) This consensus document can serve as a food guide to help members discern issues and make good policy decisions. It will be simple and easy to follow with the necessary backup information. We will still remain knee-deep in discussions, work with allies, and continue to put together in-depth white papers, clarify issues, and have pointed conversations with legislators. Since nearly 100% of the research results and studies that are presented are influenced by big money and whoever backs the study, the proposed consensus viewpoints will serve as the lenses of truth to filter the facts and set the framework for more balanced conversations and decisions. To do this, the POP Campaign will initiate a series of powerful, yet simple, online surveys to gather information from you including some of the following concepts—accurate labeling, preserving choices, pure raw food options, decision making, transparency. Stay tuned.

Options: Facing Issues Head-on... and telling the truth as fast as you can!

Fortified with your brilliant survey answers, the Pop Campaign’s intention is to be present and address all living food and organic issues. We will face these issues head-on, utilizing our grassroots-built body of evidence and offering true “common sense” options to policy-makers.

For example, at the Bioneers Conference at the end of 2010, John Warner, one of the pioneers of “green chemistry,” in a discussion of bio-mimicry, stated that “nature is the highest teacher”—this is its destiny and its miracle—so let it be a clear measure. The comedic tragedy of food and supplements is that industry and big business spend millions to improve

and reassemble nature’s deepest molecules to create bigger profits “just because we can.” When this happens with our food, the original instructions are interfered with and the vital life force is compromised. Nature seeds itself, grows, nourishes and adapts—this is its truth. By aligning the integrity of green chemistry with common sense solutions, once and for all, we can establish a constituent-backed toxicology for foods. Do we know kids are obese? We know how they get that way. We do know who is lying and who is not. We know what pollutes our fields. We know what weakens us. To know this is to be “bio-smart.” To ignore this is to be reckless. To weave off this course in food policy-making may simply be morally wrong and criminally negligent once the truth is known. We will simply present this information. ➡



“Some food issues and agendas just go on and on for years and get snarly—the “fat cat-like” approach where “those who can afford it, wait” or the “boil the frog slowly” approach where the frog fails to jump out of the boiling water because of the slow increase in temperature—either way—we must stand firm and persevere; we must be defensive when necessary and a pro-active voice when called. We must be bio-smart in every way... and remain optimistic.”

—RUDI LEONARDI



“We need to develop a simple consensus document that outlines the organic communities basic beliefs and desires, a document that every legislator can say, any legislation we put forward fits within the parameters of the POP Campaign’s framework.” —BETH CLAY

Sorting through the nuts and bolts of a “bio-smart” healthy policy that reflects the natural processes will offer a new norm that reflects a true ecological fecundity in the national food production and supply. This is the “re-think” that is possible when facing issues head-on. A “bio-smart” policy approach will frame the power and quality of food production that “Preserves the Organic Power” of nature’s food supply and strengthens our course towards healthy living.

Preventative measures in one industry can greatly reduce safety concerns for organics such as egg recalls and cattle manure contamination. Therefore, another notable example and clear game-changer is the bio-smart Stonyfield Farm and Organic Valley Cooperative stories—www.stonyfield.com. Whether or not one supports dairy and meat, in our conversations with Gary Hirshberg, Michale Ableman and staff, the POP Campaign lauds these efforts as a model example of how organic production, distribution, and waste can be handled in the deepest green and most conscious ways. This is done through personal responsibility, merging technology and eco-enhancing practices to the detail, while being extraordinarily successful. This is the kind of blueprint model beneficial for all growers of food as well for Congressional policy makers. These options must become alternatives to regulatory infringement and restriction.

A Human Rights Issue: Healthy Choice v Junk Food: An American Entitlement and a Challenge

Congressional efforts around food policy, especially regarding safety, can have an underpinning of destabilization of our freedom of choice and quality of food. In a funny way, it reflects a cultural erosion of the basic

fabric of our food choices, and our basic right to choice must be fought for and protected.

Although many of us choose organic, many Americans are still attracted to cheap and toxic food. The basic fabric is in all of us who have been contaminated internally and blinded by our habits and “bad” food choices, now or in the past. There has been a rapid rate of food changes in our country over the past decades, like an undertow, and we have gotten caught in it. Sodas and sugar are so woven into our culture, our survival can become a flight to and fight for our junk food. Corporations love the fact that we eat junk food for much of our lives, then become even more dependent on their patented drugs, and finally help fuel the medical system. We are no longer aware of the degree of toxicity in our bodies. We are numb but still have fun.

Recently, an HHI Health Educator, one week into the program, stood up and humorously shared with the group that she still had a chocolate chip cookie in her car and said, “It calls out to me in the middle of the night.” Everyone laughed. Even after learning the truth—and experiencing a healthy diet—chemical cravings still cry out. In our core relationship with our food, we still witness the blind effects of our toxic past. Our habits put us at risk. Two worlds clash and fight within us.

Freedom of choice may mean that it is time to coexist in the two food worlds. For those adults who prefer to choose toxic foods and defy healthy living, they will be allowed. For those who choose to eat well, and avoid becoming an endangered species, they will be free to do so. For those who want **everyone** to eat toxic food, the battle-lines must be drawn harshly—both on a national and international level as well as in our

personal lives. The playing field must be leveled.

The freedom of choice for the young people and children may be different. The real safety and protection concern surrounds their education—or lack of education—about food. Adults too often cave to forces around them: convenience and habit, marketing and greed, cartoon commercials, limited parental time, and let their children grow up with the same mindset, beliefs, and addictive hungers for toxic foods that they have. It may be time to just “Stop It!” It is very important for children to be given the opportunity to eat healthy and grow up healthy. While many children around the world go with too little food, too many children in our country and other developed nations continue to be wrongly-fed. The right to healthy food, knowledge, and choices for children is a human rights issue and a civil rights issue for all of us. The POP Campaign intends to strengthen our rights by gathering more input from all of you and proposing the following actions:

- » A UN Amendment to the Human Rights Declaration pertaining to the right to Choose Quality Food—including backup country legislation.
- » Formulate a National Children’s Food Rights Declaration that young children at an early age are to be taught the truth about healthy food and given options.
- » That young children be protected under the law from being given GMO food.
- » Establish an International Organic Living Foods Week in every country in the world where education about health and quality food choices are presented.
- » One Blind Curve—It is going to become a local food fight—get ready.

Codex continues to be a threat. Some products that have become issues are Noni and Kava, for example. More research is being done on these. Codex also has sent out a survey to all member countries “to gauge the use of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional levels,” as well as to learn about nutritional issues within the region which were described as, “obesity, nutritional profiles, and any public health-oriented actions taken, including the use of nutritional labeling and claims.” This means that the long arm is reaching into our backyards and is setting the stage for action.

It is important to pay attention to what local governments might do in response to Codex—especially at the state level. The issue of climate change has surfaced in discussions at Codex meetings and among staff—which is an opportunity to bring forth food related growing issues, “bio-smart” farming, and proceed with discussions about sustainability.

MOMS4POP Launches

Hundreds of thousands of moms in this country are getting outraged about their food choices. This has ignited a fire that the POP Campaign intends to fuel. The moms of this country are the ones who can set the blueprint for healthy food choices and food quality in 2011. They are the major stakeholders and have a growing hunger for organics. They want to bring into their daily lives the honest truth about food, effecting “common sense” shopping methods and prudent food choices. Nearly 80% of the people who shop in this country are women—and most of them are mothers.

While we do not have the funding for millions of dollars in research, we will trust the instincts of moms across this country. Informed moms are truth gauges.

Mom really is the one who truly cares. It is our mothers who gave us our first feeding experience—**all of us**. We value what she says—at least to a certain age—and we trust her voice.



“The Genie is out of the bottle... and it is the new American Mom” —MIKAËLE HOLZER

We know the power of this self-interest. Every mom wants their child and family to stay away from that which harms them—it is instinctual. Moms who stand up against toxic food and for organic and living food can make a huge difference. Moms tell good stories and challenge myths. We are asking moms to speak up and show up for POP—Preserving Organic Power. We are launching MOMS4POP. Please join us—visit www.POPcampaign.org.

MOMS4POP will:

- » Support a place where moms can share their stories and strategies around healthy living food and elevate awareness.
- » Engage in “Shop Talk”—moms share what they know with at least one other cart-pusher in the market by pointing out “bad” food and suggesting healthier options.
- » Hand out a simple information card on the same healthy issues that the POP Campaign will hand out to Congressional members.
- » MOMS4POP will support each other—and the POP Campaign—through their efforts and networks and become a driving, self-sufficient economic force.

- » MOMS4POP will hold politicians and policy makers accountable by showing up in mass when necessary.
- » A call on mothers to take a stand against toxic food and **for** organic, healthy food.
- » MOMS4POP will schedule Organic Mondays—eating organic is a health event.
- » Myth-busting evening discussions, lunches and meetup groups and share true stories of what is possible.

Policy and regulations are based upon attitudes and beliefs, as well as facts. Your voices are very important in holding the FDA accountable to our organic food and freedom of choice principles. We have worked well with Congress and will go back to them if the FDA goes too far in its regulatory process. We intend to continue breaking new ground in our country, showing the benefits of living, healthy, organic food access and choices. It is essential that you participate and work with us to educate policy-makers at every level and support each other.

Please donate your time, resource and money.

Visit www.POPcampaign.org, call (415) 999-9414 or email rudi@popcampaign.org.