



Cloudy with a Chance of Toxic Water

For two days this week, more than 400,000 Toledo-area residents couldn't drink the water in their kitchens. The city gets its water from Lake Erie, part of the world's largest freshwater system. But a combination of warming temperatures and pollution from industrial farms turned their tap water toxic. So toxic, explains Tom Philpott of *Mother Jones*, that city officials warned people not to bathe their kids or wash their dishes in it. What turned the water toxic? Something called algae blooms.



Where did they come from? Philpott cites a *Wall Street Journal* report: "The Maumee River drains more than four million acres of agricultural land and dumps it into Lake Erie at the Port of Toledo. More than 80% of the Maumee River watershed is devoted to agriculture, mainly the corn-soy duopoly that carpets the Midwest. Fertilizer and manure runoff from the region's farms feed blue-green algae blooms in the southwest corner of Lake Erie, from which Toledo draws its water."

Why did the algae blooms form? An article in *The Guardian*, aptly titled "Farming practices and climate change at root of Toledo water pollution," summed it up this way: "The main cause for such algal blooms is an overload of phosphorus, which washes into lakes from commercial fertiliser used by farming operations as well as urban water-treatment centres. Hotter and longer summers also promote the spread of the blue-green scum."

City officials rushed to reassure residents that the crisis is over, even showing a video of Mayor D. Michael Collins enthusiastically chugging a glass of water. Maybe. But scientists say the crisis is far from over. orgcns.org/1Aoh1Lm

Wanted: Celebrity Chef to Promote Monsanto

In its latest ploy to brainwash consumers, Monsanto is teaming up with a major media conglomerate to bribe nonprofits with money in exchange for promoting GMO foods. They want a celebrity chef to be part of the equation. *Gawker* published an email from Condé Nast outlining plans for a Monsanto-sponsored TV panel on "food, food chains and sustainability," featuring celebrity chef Mo Rocca. Rocca contacted *Gawker* the next day saying that yes, he had been pitched that project, but before he could say yes or no, a letter went out suggesting he was signed on. "That's not the case. I'm not involved with it," Rocca said. That would leave the job open. Until some other celebrity chef takes the bait?

Gawker also published a confidential memo it obtained, jointly written by Condé Nast and Monsanto, soliciting nonprofits to promote—for pay—Monsanto's genetically modified Frankenfoods. From the memo: "The Condé Nast Media Group is producing, showcasing and distributing a Monsanto sponsored film series entitled *A Seat at the Table* (working title). Hosted and moderated by a well-known media figure, each episode will feature an eclectic mix of industry and non-industry notables with diverse viewpoints about food in this country. Guests from all walks of life (two guests and one Monsanto expert per episode) will be encouraged to engage in spirited conversation..." That's one Monsanto "expert" per episode. Armed with an overflowing kettle of propaganda that he or she will spoon feed to the audience. In a "spirited" fashion.

It's all part of Monsanto's massively expensive public relations campaign to convince consumers that the Gene Giant manufactures food, glorious food. Instead of what we all know the company actually makes millions of dollars selling: chemicals, toxic chemicals. Take Action: orgcns.org/1o1jlczc

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Yes, We Can

The World Wildlife Fund estimates that since 1960, a third of the world's arable land has been lost through erosion and other degradation. Much of the destruction is caused by increased demand for GMO corn, soy, cotton, canola, sugar beet and alfalfa crops, used to feed factory farm animals, to produce highly-subsidized yet inefficient biofuels and to make processed foods. The perpetual cycle of planting mono-crops, saturating the crops and fields with toxic chemicals, tilling them under and replanting them destroys the soil and degrades the land by depleting soil nutrients and causing erosion. Overgrazing pastures instead of managing livestock herds holistically, using a system of planned rotational grazing, is equally destructive. Destruction of land and soil by poor farming isn't inevitable. We just have to connect economic growth to ecological restoration—and restoring ecological function is the only way we will survive." How do we do it? In large part through "regenerative agriculture," in combination with reducing fossil fuel emissions and reversing global deforestation. Can we do it? Yes. But as Alan Savory cautioned, regenerative agriculture represents a small minority, probably 3 - 5%, of today's global agriculture. Sadly, 90% of farmers, policy-makers and the public still believe in an agricultural model based on chemistry, technology and faulty policy.

"We're not even at the table," Savory said. But we could be. One of the key ways to do that, Savory said, is to convince consumers, who far outnumber producers, that agriculture has to change. Our failure to do so will not only lead to hunger and poverty, but it will represent a huge missed opportunity to help reverse global warming. orgcns.org/1pejCxL

Inch by Inch

GMO labeling law: Right to Know Colorado activists on delivered 167,950 signatures to the Secretary of State, in support of Initiative 48, a citizen-led campaign to pass a GMO labeling law in Colorado.

Save the Bees: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it will ban neonicotinoid insecticides from all wildlife refuges in the U.S. by January 2016, and will also ban the use of GE crops to feed wildlife.

Monsanto's Glyphosate & Roundup: The EPA rejected an emergency plea by Texas cotton-growers to use a highly toxic chemical called propazine to battle weeds that no longer respond to massive doses of Monsanto's Roundup.

2,4-D "Agent Orange": 21,000 responded to our plea to ask Congress members to sign on to a letter by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME), asking both the EPA and the USDA to deny approval of Dow's new 2,4-D "Agent Orange" corn and soy crops, and the chemical company's deadly herbicide, Enlist Duo.

Save the Date. Save the Bees.

On August 16, beekeepers, gardeners and activists will gather in cities across the country to celebrate National Honeybee Day. There will be great opportunities to take action for honeybees..

Complete list of events: orgcns.org/1oSry7Z