

A close-up photograph of a woman with long, dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a wide-eyed, open-mouthed expression of shock or surprise. Her hands are pressed against her cheeks, and her red-painted fingernails are visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

**THE 7 MOST  
SHOCKING THINGS**

**THE HEALTH FOOD  
INDUSTRY WILL NEVER  
TELL YOU**

## The 7 Most Shocking Things the Health Food Industry Will Never Tell You by Kristen Michaelis, AKA “Food Renegade”

In the last two decades, the organic food industry has grown by 3400%. That makes it **the fastest growing food and lifestyle trend in modern history.**

Naturally, that means that Big Food is going to cash in on this hefty chunk of change.

I don't blame them. Businesses are in business to turn a profit, and I don't begrudge them that at all.

Nevertheless, **it doesn't stop the buying public from being easily duped** by a food's health claims.

Since “health food” sells, a number of unsavory foods & agriculture practices are getting “green-washed.” They're essentially **using marketing spin to make a food or practice look more wholesome than it actually is.**

This report highlights what I consider to be the most egregious of these offenses.

# 1. “Cage-Free”, “Free range” & “Organic” egg labels do not guarantee that the chickens were raised outdoors.

One of the ways the big industrial agricultural corporations keep their hands in your pocket is by **quelling your conscience and making you feel good about your buying decisions**. This is why we have seen an upsurge in product labels for “Organic eggs” and a whole array of choices at the supermarket.

**Imagine yourself in the supermarket, next to the egg display. What’s the picture painted by some of the more popular labels put on egg cartons?**

Here are the “cage-free” eggs, which summons an image of a chicken let loose from prison and able to spread its wings. Even better, “free range” eggs connotes...well, a range, a large grassy area on a farm where chickens may bask in the sun and wander about pecking food from the ground. And the magic word, “organic” is the special spell that sets the heart and mind at ease, even if they are not any more nutritionally valuable than the eggs from “battery hens” kept in cages 24/7.

**It’s important that chickens are happy in order to produce healthy eggs.**

They are made happy by getting into the pasture, being exposed to the sunlight, and being able to eat bugs and grass.

Pastured chickens that are not fed soy or antibiotics produce eggs with [richer nutritional value](#), including the Omega-3s and DHAs lacking in “Big-Ag” corporate eggs. Real eggs from happy chickens are also healthier than eggs that come from Big-Ag battery hens because they contain less cholesterol, less saturated fat, more vitamins A, E and D and 7 times more beta carotene.

So it makes sense to want eggs from chickens that are cage-free or free-range or organic, right?

The **problem** is that the industrial agricultural corporations are a little loose with their labeling and terminology. **Do “cage-free” and “free range” eggs really come from the type of environments suggested by the labels?**

In fact, Big-Ag corporate interests who want to keep their hands in our pockets **label their eggs “cage-free” when that’s just a technicality, “free range” when it’s anything but and “organic” even if the chickens are not getting any sun and their eggs are not any nutritionally different than the eggs that come from industrialized, caged, imprisoned, packed-in, pecking-each-other-to-death big-Ag battery hens.**

A report from the Cornucopia Institute, titled [Scrambled Eggs](#), documents a practice that is too common in the industry as an attempt to keep costs down while trying to technically justify the “cage-free” label. Producers operating large-scale egg-production factories purchase the old industrial henhouses and

take the cages out. So thousands of hens remain jam-packed in a locked room, but they are no longer in cages.

In order to give them the label “free range”, they provide a small concrete porch with limited access to outside and the sun. Access is limited by small “popholes” that are not obvious exits to the hens, and the fenced-in porches are so small that **it’s impossible for all the hens to be outdoors simultaneously.**

Theoretically, a hen might go through one of these obscure popholes when it is open during the day and make it outside to the fenced-in cement porch. This would likely be a super-intelligent hen because there is nothing enticing about cement to a chicken. **There is no grass, no bugs, nothing to eat.**

Other producers keep the hens indoors in cages grouped by 150 to 200, and let them out to access the floor during the day. **This is technically considered to be “cage free”.** The Big-Ag corporate industrialized food factories **slide by on a technicality** and promote their eggs as healthier, easing your conscience, and keep their profit-flow moving smoothly.

What about “organic” eggs? Basically, it depends on where they are coming from. In many cases, **eggs that are labeled organic do not have the same nutritional value as eggs that you can buy from your local pasture-based farmer.**

Many organic producers raise hens entirely indoors, with extremely limited outdoor access. **They use a conventional, Big Ag hen house model, but substitute organic feed and stop using antibiotics on sick birds.**

The Cornucopia Institute provides a [scorecard](#) on the value of organic eggs based on criteria such as ownership structure (family farm or cooperative, etc.), who the organic certifying agency is, where the egg supply comes from, how open disclosure on practices are, commitment to organics, outdoor access, the opportunity for all birds to be outside simultaneously, outdoor management, indoor quality of life and welfare, and more. [[See the scorecard here.](#)]

In most cases, **buying eggs labeled organic is a gamble** if you are looking for eggs with the highest nutrients. A better bet is to find a source from a local pasture-based farm where the hens really are free to all be outside, pecking through the grass and eating bugs, as often as they want to be.

## 2. 100% Juice Doesn't Mean 100% Juice.

If you want to buy fresh, healthy orange juice, you of course don't buy the concentrate or juice made from the concentrate. Instead, you go for the "all natural" label, 100% orange juice that's stored fresh in the refrigerator section. The juice you get from these cartons are as pure as juice that you squeeze from your own peeled organic oranges at home, right?

Think again.

Consider what happens when you make orange juice at home. If you have never done this, or only rarely, you may want to know that every time you make orange juice it is likely that it is going to taste somewhat different. But it is going to taste good, usually.

One of the thrills of squeezing your own oranges is the all-natural taste of the oranges themselves.

**But if you buy various brands of orange juice, you are going to find that each one has its own particular flavor *every time you buy it*, just like Coke and Pepsi have their own trademark taste. Why is this the case?**

The answer has to do with scale and the way that orange juice is stored and marketed. In order to make enough orange juice to satisfy distributors and

vendors, corporate producers store it in large tanks that have been deoxygenated. This allows the juice to remain stable over a long period of time (up to a year).

**However, due to storage, the orange juice loses its entire flavor, which means no one would want to drink it.** This is advantageous to corporate entities and marketers because now they can use unique flavors for branding. **Each company therefore adds flavor packs to the orange juice before it is distributed.** That's why Tropicana always tastes *like Tropicana*, but tastes different than Minute Maid.

The point is that when the orange juice is stripped of its flavor and chemicals are added in order to give it flavor, it is no longer 100% juice.

Flavor has been added to something that naturally should already have its own flavor.

**And what's more, flavor packs do not need to be listed in the ingredients.**

The content of the flavor packs are derived from by-products of industrially processing the oranges, and chemically altered. So technically nothing is added, but things have dramatically been changed.

**But because of this the label can still say "100% Orange Juice! No additives!"**



There is something **fundamentally abnormal and disturbing** about taking a food, **changing its substance so that it is flavorless, using byproducts of the process to create flavor packs to target specific audiences, and then adding the altered by-products back to the product.**

It's reminiscent of Frankenstein in the kitchen.

The good news is that commercial orange juice need not be a staple of anyone's diet. And, you can squeeze your own fresh juice and make it healthier as well.

### 3. Just about any product can be called natural.

If a product label says the box of cereal you are about to buy is “All Natural” and has “Nothing Artificial” that means that it is made from natural, organic ingredients and will likely be nutritious, right?

Wrong.

In fact, product labeling is historically pretty loose on this matter, and **foods can use genetically modified ingredients as well as other unnatural products and still claim to be “all-natural” on the label.**

The reason, of course, that corporate producers want to make you think their product is all natural is because they know that sells to a certain target audience, and taking the money from your pockets is what really matters to them.

For example, what do you think Kellogg’s Kashi brand cereals promoted and sold in the health section of your food store as an alternative to Kellogg’s Sugar Snacks or Fruit Loops?

They sold packaging that claimed their product was all natural and contained nothing artificial. This was okay with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration because according to them, as long as food products do not contain “added

colors, artificial flavors, or synthetic substances” they could label the product as “All Natural”.

The bad news is, however, that there are plenty of ingredients that do not fall strictly into those categories, including genetically modified foods. Soybeans that were modified to withstand Round-Up treatment on crops were a factor. **Kashi’s GoLean brand used soy that was 100% genetically modified, a product that is by any definition certainly not natural.**

Consumer lawsuits were also filed for additives that resulted from processing found in Kashi products, such as pyridoxine hydrochloride, calcium pantothenate, hexane-processed soy ingredients, ascorbic acid, glycerin and sodium phosphate.

The point is not to pick on the Kashi line, but to show **that the word “natural” on a product label does not really currently mean anything, and the FDA does not regulate this kind of labeling.**

You can find the word used on any number of products from genetically modified cereal to potato chips. The end result is that the word “natural” on a food product package is **meaningless.**

If the DNA of the main ingredient in the food being sold has been altered, that food is not natural.

The word is used as a marketing ploy to motivate people who actually care about what they consume to purchase their product. But even all natural foods does not equate with “healthy”.

We can see this demonstrated in the ambitious marketing campaign conducted by PepsiCo’s Lays brand of potato chips, which have replaced toxic dyes with “natural” food ingredients. The end result, however, **is not a healthy snack** even if the product label says it is a “natural” one.

As Dr. Mercola points out in [“Are New 'Healthier' Potato Chips Really Any Better For You?”](#), the way that large quantities of food is processed for mass consumption creates byproducts that are unnatural, though they do not contain added colors, artificial flavors or synthetic substances. One byproduct of the potato chip production process is a toxic substance called acrylamide. According to Dr. Mercola,

“Animal studies have shown that exposure to acrylamide increases the risk of several types of cancer, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer considers acrylamide a "probable human carcinogen." It has also been linked to nerve damage and other neurotoxic effects, including neurological problems in workers handling the substance.

“While this chemical can be formed in many foods when they're heated to a temperature above 120 degrees Celsius (248 degrees Fahrenheit), French fries and potato chips are the biggest offenders.”

As far as potato chips go, Frito Lay also boasts of using real potatoes and no substitutes, as if this is a good thing. Did they use “all-natural” fake potatoes before?

## 4. Natural and organic foods can contain hidden MSG.

MSG is a poison that contaminates our mass food supply. Its effect is cumulative, and the “excito-toxin” can be fatal once a person reaches the threshold that their nerves can handle. So, like most health-conscious people who want to be healthy, when circumstances force you to shop at the supermarket, **you likely reach first for the natural and organic food, thinking these do not contain MSG.**

Unfortunately, they do, but it’s hidden.

When you read package labels for ingredients, it’s important to be aware that **the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allows corporate producers to call MSG by [more than 40 different names](#).**

You may skim over an ingredient without realizing that **it is just another name for MSG.**

If you are buying “healthier”, organic French fries, you may find MSG called “Autolyzed yeast extract” in the list of ingredients. Other names include maltodextrin, sodium caseinate, hydrolyzed soy protein.... I could go on.

The reason the FDA does not require producers to label products containing MSG with “MSG” is because **it is often considered to be a constituent of an ingredient and not an ingredient itself.**

The distinction is between poured and processed. **MSG that is processed into a product need not be identified on the label** – only the actual ingredient that was added before processing.

Say, for example, that a food manufacturer adds a pre-made spice blend to their food. The spice blend contains MSG. The food manufacturer can still claim no MSG was added to the food because they didn’t add an ingredient called “MSG,” they added an ingredient called “spices.”

A label may therefore similarly boast “No MSG Added” **even if it is processed into the product.**

MSG is in other words not added as an ingredient to the product, but is a constituent that is either included as an ingredient of the ingredients listed, or released through processing, such as in hydrolization or fermentation.

Major brands that want cheap production and target a health-conscious market take advantage of this, and will sell you more MSG hidden in the ingredients even when you are trying to avoid it.

## **5. Soy protein is an industrial waste product, not a food.**

Everyone knows that soy is a health food, right?

That's why vegetarian, granola-consuming tree-huggers prefer soy milk to cow's milk (it doesn't exploit the cow and it's a rich protein source).

Soy has been proclaimed universally as an organic, healthy food. It's so well-known and well-established by repetition and its use in the packaging and marketing of health foods (everything from soy burgers to soy pancakes and soy-based fish-sticks) that it's almost axiomatic; it's a no-brainer.

Soy is a health food and good for you.

**Except that it's not.**

In reality, soy was not even a real food consumed in large quantities by the public until the very recent past. (Yes, even in Asia. There, soy was mostly grown as an "in-between" crop that restored nitrogen to fields, and the soybeans, if harvested, were fed to farm animals. People only consumed soy in times of extreme poverty or famine. Eventually, they learned how to ferment soy into foods like natto, miso, tempeh, and soy sauce, which actually does transform it into something healthier for humans to eat.)



Recently, soy fields began being grown in order to create an alternative to vegetable oil, and **the byproduct of creating soybean oil (soy protein isolate) is what is being marketed and sold as the healthy alternative to meat.**

That's right.

**A byproduct of an industrial food process contaminated with toxins and carcinogens to create hydrogenated oil, a byproduct that is contaminated with toxins and carcinogens, has been universally accepted as a healthier alternative to meat.**

But no matter how often the profit-seeking corporations try, non-food is never healthier than real food.

This is the case with soy as well, and it **comes with its own intrinsic dangers**, including possible developmental challenges, future menstrual problems and younger onset of puberty for girls (as early as ages 6 and 7), digestive problems, infertility and more.

There are four basic ingredients in the soy byproduct that can cause deleterious effects, including phytoestrogens, goitrogens (which suppress and negatively impact the thyroid), phytates (block mineral absorption, and trypsin inhibitors that prevent the appropriate digestion of protein and can harm the pancreas.

Dr. Joseph Mercola summarizes some of its other dangers [here](#). Soy contains other properties, including:

“Hemagglutinin: A clot-promoting substance that causes your red blood cells to clump, making them unable to properly absorb and distribute oxygen to your tissues.

“Synthetic Vitamin D: Soy foods increase your body's vitamin D requirement, which is why companies add synthetic vitamin D2 to soymilk (a toxic form of vitamin D).

“Vitamin B12: Soy contains a compound resembling vitamin B12 that cannot be used by your body, so soy foods can actually contribute to B12 deficiency, especially among vegans.

“Protein Denaturing: Fragile proteins are denatured during high temperature processing to make soy protein isolate and textured vegetable protein (TVP). Chemical processing of soy protein results in the formation of toxic lysinoalanine and highly carcinogenic nitrosamines.

“MSG: Free glutamic acid, or MSG, is a potent neurotoxin. MSG is formed during soy food processing, plus additional MSG is often added to mask soy's unpleasant taste.

“Aluminum and Manganese: Soy foods contain high levels of aluminum, which is toxic to your nervous system and kidneys, and manganese, which wreaks havoc on your baby's immature metabolic system.”

The way soy has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry in the last few years is both sad and infuriating because soy is not natural for human consumption.

## **6. Most food products that claim to be “made with” a healthy ingredient usually contain very little of that product.**

In order for huge corporate industrialized food manufacturers to put “made with” on their labels, all they have to do is add a little.

The FDA does not regulate or require a certain amount of sugar and spice and everything nice for a product to claim to contain the healthy ingredients we desire.

So, for instance, a food producer could make bread that is 95% white flour, throw in 5% whole grain flour, and then proclaim on the package label, “Made with Whole Grains”.

Moreover, bread that is “Multigrain” tells you nothing, and likely includes mostly refined grains.

Again, they are targeting people who have a desire to do the right thing in order to continue to reach in their pockets and take their money. They are not concerned about doing the right thing. The food industry is only concerned about making a profit, not making sure that you eat in a way that adds nutritional value to your diet.

A health conscious person may not want to eat a product that is 95% corn starch and sugar for breakfast, so will pass on the Pop Tarts and choose the “healthy” brand instead, “made with real fruit” without realizing that the pastry is only 5% real fruit.

## 7. Low-fat food isn't healthy, and may in fact be a leading cause of the obesity epidemic.

For many years now Americans have been virtually brainwashed into believing that “Low Fat” equates with healthy. Marketers put it on product packages: “LOW Fat!” Fad diets call for the elimination of meat products, bacon and butter.

Television food gurus and popular opinion continues to repeat the mantra that fat increases the risk of heart disease and leads to obesity.

**All untrue.**

According to a recent study published in the peer review journal *Annals of Internal Medicine* which reviewed every single study done on dietary intake of saturated fat and incidence of heart disease in the past few decades, not only is **there no evidence that saturated fat increases the risk for heart disease, but low-fat diets may in fact be a cause of obesity.**

Rather than making butter the sinister culprit, the real enemies are sugar and processed foods. [Mark Bittman, writing for The New York Times](#), has this to say:

“Since the 1970s almost everyone in this country has been subjected to a barrage of propaganda about saturated fat. It was bad for you; it would kill you. Never mind that much of the nonsaturated fat was in the form of trans

fats, now demonstrated to be harmful. Never mind that many polyunsaturated fats are chemically extracted oils that may also, in the long run, be shown to be problematic.

“Never mind, too, that the industry’s idea of “low fat” became the emblematic SnackWell’s and other highly processed “low-fat” carbs (a substitution that is probably the single most important factor in our overweight/obesity problem), as well as reduced fat and even fat-free dairy, on which it made billions of dollars. (How you could produce fat-free “sour cream” is something worth contemplating.)

“But let’s not cry over the chicharrones or even nicely buttered toast we passed up. And let’s not think about the literally millions of people who are repelled by fat, not because it doesn’t taste good (any chef will tell you that “fat is flavor”) but because they have been brainwashed.

“Rather, let’s try once again to pause and think for a moment about how it makes sense for us to eat, and in whose interest it is for us to eat hyperprocessed junk. The most efficient summary might be to say “eat real food” and “avoid anything that didn’t exist 100 years ago.” You might consider a dried apricot (one ingredient) versus a Fruit Roll-Up (13 ingredients, numbers 2, 3 and 4 of which are sugar or forms of added sugar). Or you might reflect that real yogurt has two or three ingredients (milk plus bacteria, with some jam or honey if you like) and that the number in Breyers YoCrunch Cookies n’ Cream Yogurt is unknowable (there are a

few instances of “and/or”) but certainly at least 18.

“Many things have gone awry with the way we produce food. And it isn’t just the existence of junk food but the transformation of ingredients we could once take for granted or thought of as “healthy.” Indeed, meat, dairy, wheat and corn have become foods that frequently contain antibiotics and largely untested chemicals, or are produced using hybrids or methods that have increased yield but may have produced unwanted results.”

Low-fat diets make it harder to absorb important vitamins, such as A, D, E and K. These vitamins are important because they assist growth and development, the immune system, blood clotting and cell repair.

**If fat soluble nutrients are not available for absorption, these vitamins will not be used by your body, which can lead to numerous health problems.**

Not only are the processed foods unhealthy in many foods labeled as “low fat”, but studies conducted at Cornell University have also shown that due to the labeling, people tend to eat more, which also has a direct impact on weight and the promotion of obesity.



## Conclusion

These are not the only examples of how the health-food industry has lied to you.

So, what are you supposed to do?

If you can't trust the diet dictocrats to tell you what to eat? Who can you trust?

That's the point of Food Renegade ([www.foodrenegade.com](http://www.foodrenegade.com)). I wanted to create a space where we can think critically about what's in our food, and opt to support the people who are "doing it right" -- like local grass-based farmers, organic growers, and the conscientious creators of truly wholesome food.

Welcome to the Real Food Revolution!