

Commonsense



Buying Organic is not enough

By Anna Piva



THOUGHTS...

This is just an experiment. The information you will find in this newsletter are just a reflection on a wide variety of subjects related to healthy living, food, and nutrition.

COMMONSENSE

Is a precious weapon that allows us to make better choices. Most of the time, or too often, commonsense is underestimated or not taken in consideration as a valuable source to guide our daily decisions on health and nutrition.

In this posts I ask myself questions that I want to share with you. The aim is to open an helpful dialogue between us.

I want to start this post with a simple question: how many people do you know with food allergies and intolerance to certain substances? If you are my age or older (I grew up in the Seventies), did you have friends with food allergies in school? I personally had none. My friends' children, today, on the contrary, have many allergies. I, myself, have developed allergies! How is that possible? My first thought goes to the change in food quality, not to mention water and air. Our body is nourished by food, water and air. These are the fundamental elements that fuel our cells. If what we put in our body is "corrupted" a reaction is caused. Allergies are most likely a reaction to an improper nutrition, in this case, to the nutrients that do not exist in nature, as GMOs.

Avoiding GMO food and buying Organic food today is definitely a good step to protect our own health, but it is not enough to guarantee it in the long run. Why is that?

Simply because Organic food will be soon outsourced. It might be in few years or a decade, or it might take a little longer, but if we do not take any action today, Organic food won't exist anymore. It might sound dramatic, but my thoughts are simply derived from the observation and the study on how genetically modified (GMO) crops are behaving in our environment.

If I think of my youth, I do not recall any distinction between food that was labeled Organic or not Organic. In the Nineties, in Milan where I am from, the first BIO Supermarkets started to pop up. BIO stands for Biological, or simply grown along nature's rules. Nowadays Organic, or BIO is all over the place: food packaging, people's mouth, commercials and so on and so forth. But what has exactly changed over the past fifty years? What changed are: food production and food consumption. The Fifties and the Sixties were characterized by the

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growth of wealth in the United States and also in Europe. More people were able to buy food in a wider variety and in more quantity. The food industry immediately understood how to exploit the social change. To make more money it was crucial to “tell” people to eat more, in the first place, and secondly, it was fundamental to reduce costs of production.

The commercialization of abundance happened pretty easily because the majority of people have the tendency to believe what they are told and they rarely take the time to verify the information passed along. Do you remember a few years ago when we were told that avocados were too fatty and not good for our health? Avocado farming suffered tremendously because no one was consuming the product. Today, avocado is pushed as if it was the healthiest fruit on earth! We could make a long list of foods that have been commercialized as a health panacea. Every year something new is out on the market and people just buy without consciousness. Today major illnesses like obesity or diabetes are the clear result of this lack of awareness and “education.”

The abatement of costs’ production, on the other hand, was possible thanks to the invention of engineered crops. Engineered crops do not require the same amount of “men hours” to harvest, they are more resistant to

climate changes or insects, and last but not least, engineered plants do not produce fertile seed. This means that every year new seeds must be purchased and planted. In a nutshell, GMOs need less labor, are less exposed to product’s loss because of plants are stronger, and more money is made from seeds sale. How good can that be?! Too bad the other side of the coin was not considered: engineered food destroys not only nature, but also human health.

As I stated at the beginning of my post, GMOs do NOT exist in nature. They are engineered in a laboratory, as, for example, plastic is. I, in fact, like to call GMO food: plastic food. Do you remember the “Mad Cow” disease that affected British cows in the Nineties? Well, I do and very vividly since meat was banned from any table in all Europe for quite a long period of time. We know that cows eat grass. Just grass. At that time the greediness of breeders induced them to feed cows with everything else but grass: mainly with crushed bones of dead sheep. The left over of dead sheep, some also contaminated with bacteria, instead of being eliminated, was cheaply sold in the black market and used to feed cows. The consequence was the spread of a terrible disease, called the “Mad Cow infectious agent.” It killed thousands and thousands of animals. Even worse, meat from those animals was sold in supermarkets and consequently

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people started to die. The mad cow agent, in fact, can be transferred to humans. I brought up this story as an example of the effect derived from “improper” nutrients. Along this matter, can a laboratory/engineered food be really safe to our health as we are told? And if it is so safe, why are Monsanto and the other big corporations that support GMOs against “labeling” their products? When we prepare our resume, we list all of our skills and qualities. Don’t we?!? So, if GMOs are, and I repeat myself, so safe, why shouldn’t we read it on a label: “this can contains safe GMOs (plastic) food...”

Nature is also affected by GMOs. The latest news is that every year bee breeders loose a huge number of insects. GMO industry calls itself out, but we interestingly discovered that the majority of the bee farms affected by the loss are situated near GMO plantations. In Italy, for example, the same phenomenon happened in the past years. The cause, though, was slightly different. In fact they discovered that bees suffered from loss of orientation because of the terrible pollution.

GMO plants are contagious. Yes, they are like a virus. We all know that the Hawaiian papaya is nowadays 99% GMO. This is not because all plantations were cultivated with GMO seeds, but simply because those seeds contaminated the natural ones. Contamination

is the biggest threat to those farms that are fighting to maintain their products along with nature’s rules. Contamination is happening at a speed we do not even realize. That is why, buying Organic today is not enough to guarantee the future of our planet and our health.

We, CSA members, understood the importance of respecting nature’s rules such as consuming seasonal products and supporting local farms. As long as food demand is uncontrolled and people want to consume strawberries in January and cauliflower in June, and in an enormous quantity, we consumers are just helping corporations to flourish and farms to die. What is next to do, then? We can actually do a lot. We can override the situation. Have you ever thought at how many representatives we have in the Congress? 435, plus an additional 100 in the Senate. 535 human beings rule our country. Manhattan population is around 1,619 million (2012 statistic). So, how is it possible that 535 people have more power that 1,619 million? Because they are politicians? Not exactly. It is because they make choices and they act. We, “common” people, barely make choices for ourselves. And this is our main fault. In fact history taught us that centuries of Monarchy could be overridden by a “people’s” revolution. See in this regard the French revolution. When people are united and fight

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FUTURE...

I hope you will send some comments at:
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Writings, thoughts, research papers on food, healthy living, food policies, nutrition are welcome. For everyone interested, please send an email specifying subject of discussion and an abstract.

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for a shared cause, no Monarchy or Dictatorship, Congress or Senate can win. And here resides our opportunity. We have to stand up and take action, a bigger action than simply buying Organic food rather than GMO food.

In recent days the so-called “Monsanto Protection Act” has been removed from a Senate spending bill. This is a big victory, but it still needs support from all of us. If we truly understand and care for our food safety, we all have to take

action protesting against all the politicians, Democrats or Republicans, that support the Monsanto Protection Act. How can we do it? Simply communicating that we won’t vote for them any longer. Our political power is the electorate. We have to send out a clear message that from now on we will only support those who support and protect food safety and respect the rules of nature. As consumers, our power resides at our table, and exactly here starts our revolution.

