



Nature
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Cc: Lauren Morello, Senior New Editor, Richard Monastersky, News Features Editor

My name is Dave Murphy, I'm the founder and executive director of Food Democracy Now!, a grassroots movement of more than 650,000 farmers and citizens dedicated to reforming food, agriculture and environmental policy and access to healthy food.

We are currently working on issues of transparency surrounding funding of public university research scientists from biotech corporations like Monsanto, DuPont, Dow, BASF, Bayer and Syngenta and their relationships with agriculture and chemical industry front groups. As advocates for farmers, citizens and sound agricultural practices we are concerned about the intersection between public university academics who appear to have undisclosed funding from corporations, resulting in conflicts of interest and manipulation of public opinion through high level access to media.

One of the tools that's been used to discover some of these corporate ties and malfeasance is Freedom of Information Act and state freedom of information laws.

A blogger who has been closely covering the use of public records and public scientists is Keith Kloor. On February 11, 2015, Kloor broke the story regarding FOIA requests for public scientists in biotechnology in *Science* titled "*Agricultural researchers rattled by demands for documents from group opposed to GM foods*" that exposed a link between political campaigns to defeat GMO labeling and biotech companies using PR firms and university scientists to manipulate public opinion while failing to disclose their close behind the scenes coordination.

Most recently, Kloor wrote a second story on the same issue for *Nature* magazine that revealed concerns over corporate funding and close connections between biotech companies, trade groups and university scientists and conflicts of interest were well founded.

Oddly enough, I discovered that [Keith Kloor gave a lecture](#) at the Alliance for Science at Cornell University, which is widely considered a biotech astroturf group, much like GMO Answers and the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO).

Kloor's March 23rd, 2015 Alliance for Science talk, titled "How Cultural Brokers Shape the GMO Debate", resonated more like an activist than an objective reporter. As you may know, the Alliance for Science is currently petitioning against these FOIA requests for public university scientists and Kloor's talk, falling between both these breaking stories and the launch of a petition by this organization, raises serious red flags.



As I'm sure you'll agree, openness and transparency regarding funding and relationships with corporations are instrumental in maintaining the integrity of science and public trust in scientists and the media.

I am greatly concerned, as I am sure that you are, of the potential conflicts of interest between Keith Kloor and the Alliance for Science and would like to know if the organization or a private company paid his expenses or possibly an honorarium to give this talk. Also, has Kloor disclosed this or any other potential conflicts of interest to you or your editorial team?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dave Murphy
Founder / Executive Director
Food Democracy Now!

Attachment: Keith Kloor speaking at Cornell's Alliance for Science, April 8, 2015

