

Message

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**From:** DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=AP-5340-01/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=██████████]  
**Sent:** 2/1/2016 4:57:00 PM  
**To:** ROBINSON, CHELSEY K [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/cn=Recipients/cn=██████████]; WAGGONER, COLE [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/cn=Recipients/cn=██████████]  
**Subject:** RE: New FOIA article from Gillam

Thanks...knew we had something!

Regards,  
Melissa

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**From:** ROBINSON, CHELSEY K [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 01, 2016 4:52 PM  
**To:** DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]; WAGGONER, COLE [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** RE: New FOIA article from Gillam

We do to a degree – not exactly what he’s discussing below. I also know Cole is working on proactive content that gives a high level view of the value of ppp.

<http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/response-to-right-to-know.aspx>

<http://www.monsanto.com/improvingagriculture/pages/collaborating-with-academics-and-universities.aspx>

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**From:** DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 01, 2016 4:45 PM  
**To:** ROBINSON, CHELSEY K [AG/1000]; WAGGONER, COLE [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** RE: New FOIA article from Gillam

Don’t we have materials that talk about how we approach collaborations in the private/public space?

Regards,  
Melissa

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**From:** ROBINSON, CHELSEY K [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 01, 2016 4:34 PM  
**To:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000]; WAGGONER, COLE [AG/1000]  
**Cc:** HOOD, AIMEE [AG/1000]; RAMARAJU, KRISHNA [AG/1000]; DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** RE: New FOIA article from Gillam

Hi Eric – I would be happy to connect about this – but am traveling wed-fri on vacation, so would only have availability tomorrow.

This idea is similar to one that Melissa and I have discussed regarding transparency of our partnerships and funding, the reason behind it, and then examples – not exhaustive. This is something we had discussed potentially doing through the sustainability report.

I also agree with the thought around providing context especially around discussion of the value expert perspective can bring on a wide range of topics – I think this is something we need to be very clear about and hit strongly.

Copying Melissa for her thoughts as well.

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**From:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 01, 2016 1:14 PM  
**To:** ROBINSON, CHELSEY K [AG/1000]; WAGGONER, COLE [AG/1000]  
**Cc:** HOOD, AIMEE [AG/1000]; RAMARAJU, KRISHNA [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** RE: New FOIA article from Gillam

Chelsey and Cole – Aimee and I spoke this morning about developing a communication plan that provided a 10,000 foot view of how Monsanto works with public sector scientists and/or provides funding to public sector programs. The goal would be to post content on our website that we could reference when legitimate journalists delve into allegations about our engagements from critics like USRTK.

The idea is NOT to provide exhaustive information about where our funding has gone, researcher by researcher and university by university. Instead, we want to thread the needle and only describe why and how we have engaged the public sector and use some examples. Because FOIA has focused on Folta, Chassy, Fedoroff, Juma, Shelton, Zilberman, Phillips, AgBioChatter, etc., we propose to generally discuss these engagements in the context of providing expert perspective on a range of topics and issues surrounding GMOs and agriculture. We want to provide context for funding or for building relationships to foster better communication to broad audiences.

While the content mentioned above would not be responsive to specific allegations – so as not to ignite trench combat – it would provide a rich resource when journalists contact Monsanto to inquire about allegations spun by our critics. Our response would be stronger because we can point the journalists to material that provides a broader context for our interactions, and that would reinforce our direct answers.

Aimee and I would like to sit down with you to discuss this approach, get aligned and plan next steps. Can we make this happen this week?

Regards,  
Eric

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**From:** DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 01, 2016 12:20 PM  
**To:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000] <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com>; ROBINSON, CHELSEY K [AG/1000] <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com>  
**Cc:** WAGGONER, COLE [AG/1000] <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com>  
**Subject:** RE: New FOIA article from Gillam

Eric – thanks. Cole is working on the proactive outreach regarding public/private partnerships. Chelsey is helping lead the issue response.

Regards,  
Melissa

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**From:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 01, 2016 11:11 AM  
**To:** DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]  
**Cc:** WAGGONER, COLE [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** RE: New FOIA article from Gillam

We also need to provide context for this section...

He then tells Chassy he is working on a plan for Monsanto and others in the agribusiness industry to support an “academics review” website that Chassy can use to counter concerns and allegations raised by critics of

GMOs. "From my perspective the problem is one of expert engagement and that could be solved by paying experts to provide responses," Sachs wrote. "The key will be keeping Monsanto in the background so as not to harm the credibility of the information."

The statement about the need to compensate experts that respond to allegations raised by critics needs more context and perspective. The issue was NOT that we wanted to pay the experts but an acknowledgement that experts would need to be compensated for the time they invest in drafting responses for external engagement. No one works for free! What we had discussed was a modest payment \$500-1000 for researching and reporting on an allegation. If an expert would be compensated it is much more likely that they would invest their time and effort. Absent compensation, experts will predictably invest their time on other matters linked to other forms of compensation. That's reality and unfortunately it means that interested parties looking for expert analysis won't find it because there is no compensation mechanism to produce the analysis and critical review.

Eric

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**From:** DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 30, 2016 9:18 AM  
**To:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000] <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com>  
**Subject:** Re: New FOIA article from Gillam

Eric- hope you had a great night last night. The more I have looked at this, don't kill your weekend. Look at it when you have time. We have addressed most of what is there. I think what I am going to work on is highlighting Carrie's affiliation and biased nature. Enjoy your day!

Regards - Melissa

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 29, 2016, at 5:51 PM, "DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]" <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com> wrote:

If you can look at a home computer, I think you can get past the MON fire wall. I think that Carrie's "article" thinks directly to the emails. I have looked at the Chassy binder, and most of what is in there is 2011 at earliest. I can figure out to get into that system if not and try and send them to you. Have a good evening!

Regards,  
Melissa

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**From:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 29, 2016 5:40 PM  
**To:** DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** Re: New FOIA article from Gillam

I recall these events but it would help for me to see the emails  
Eric  
Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 29, 2016, at 4:51 PM, DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]

<[REDACTED]@monsanto.com> wrote:

Attorney Client Communication

Eric,

We have taken a look at this with Charla's help and I think we have a start on most of what Carrie includes. The one's highlighted below are ones that she does not immediately recall. Can you please help with context/background with these? Don't think we want to directly address Carrie or her piece...we thought we would update the FOIA page that we have with a post directly from you.

Please let me know if you have time to discuss. It might also be a good idea to call Bruce, Jay and anyone else to understand their plans.

Kris, if you disagree with any of this, please let me know. Thanks.

Regards,  
Melissa

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**From:** ROBINSON, CHELSEY K [AG/1000]

**Sent:** Friday, January 29, 2016 4:28 PM

**To:** LORD, CHARLA MARIE [AG/1000]; DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000];  
[REDACTED]@fleishman.com; Ken Fields

**Subject:** Re: New FOIA article from Gillam

Thanks Charla- copying Melissa in for her visibility.

Thanks,  
Chelsey

On Jan 29, 2016, at 3:54 PM, LORD, CHARLA MARIE [AG/1000]

<[REDACTED]@monsanto.com> wrote:

Chelsey,

I think these are the only emails we haven't addressed in the media in the past.  
Charla

- ?
- In a November 2010 email, Monsanto chief of global scientific affairs Eric Sachs tells Chassy that Monsanto has just sent a "gift of \$10,000" to the university "so the funds should be there." He then tells Chassy he is working on a plan for Monsanto and others in the agribusiness industry to support an "academics review" website that Chassy can use to counter concerns and allegations raised by critics of GMOs. "From my perspective the problem is one of expert engagement and that could be solved by paying experts to provide responses," Sachs wrote. "The key

will be keeping Monsanto in the background so as not to harm the credibility of the information.”

- ? In a separate 2010 exchange, Jay Byrne, president of the v-Fluence public relations firm and former head of corporate communications for Monsanto, tells Chassy he is trying to move the Academics Review project forward. He suggests “we work on the money (for all of us).” Byrne says that he has a list of GMO critics for Academics Review to target. He tells Chassy that the topic areas “mean money for a range of well-heeled corporations.”
- ? In one email exchange from September 2011, Chassy suggests how the biotech crop industry might “spin” a government study that found significant levels of the chemical glyphosate, the key ingredient in Monsanto’s Roundup herbicide, in air and water samples.
- ? In April 2012, Monsanto toxicologist Bruce Hammond asks in an email if short videos can be created about the “safety of GM crops.” Chassy says that he is applying for funding from the State Department and “also seeking other sources of support” and can use university equipment to make the videos. Chassy asks Monsanto’s Hammond for a list of videos that “you think would be helpful.” Chassy tells Hammond that Byrne’s group V-fluence has helped create and edit the video scenarios.
- ? In separate emails, Monsanto’s Sachs tells Chassy that Monsanto is shooting its own videos” but says “Obviously, independent content from the U of I and supported by US Govt agencies is the preferred approach.” Sachs tells Chassy that Monsanto is happy to help “provide guidance or approaches for additional videos.”

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**From:** SCHAUL, ANDREW [AG/1000]

**Sent:** Friday, January 29, 2016 1:55 PM

**To:** INTELLIGENCE, FUSION CENTER [AG/1000]; DUNCAN, MELISSA S [AG/1000]; MURPHEY, SAMUEL [AG/1000]; ROBINSON, CHELSEY K [AG/1000]; LORD, CHARLA MARIE [AG/1000]; WEBER, NICHOLAS R [AG/1000]

**Subject:** New FOIA article from Gillam

Gillam has authored a new article (below) on FOIA - given the Annual Meeting I haven't had a chance to read through. Nick noted that activists are posting/sharing images of emails.

**Following an Email Trail: How a Public University Professor Collaborated on a Corporate PR Campaign**

Print Email Share Tweet

Posted on January 29, 2016 by Carey Gillam

By Carey Gillam

Former University of Illinois food science professor Bruce Chassy is known for his academic gravitas. Now retired nearly four years, Chassy still writes and speaks often about food safety issues, identifying himself with the full weight of the decades of experience earned at the public university and as a researcher at the National Institutes of Health. Chassy tells audiences that before he retired in 2012, he worked “full time” doing research and teaching.

What Chassy doesn't talk much about is the other work he did while at the University of Illinois – promoting the interests of Monsanto Co., which has been trying to overcome mounting public concerns about the genetically engineered crops and chemicals the company sells. He also doesn't talk much about the hundreds of thousands of dollars Monsanto donated to the university as Chassy was helping promote GMOs, or Monsanto's secretive role in helping Chassy set up a nonprofit group and website to criticize individuals and organizations who raise questions about GMOs.

But emails released through Freedom of Information Act requests show that Chassy was an active member of a group of U.S. academics who have been quietly collaborating with Monsanto on strategies aimed at not just promoting biotech crop products, but also rolling back regulation of these products and fending off industry critics. The emails show money flowing into the university from Monsanto as Chassy collaborated on multiple projects with Monsanto to counter public concerns about genetically modified crops (GMOs) – all while representing himself as an independent academic for a public institution.

A New York Times article by Eric Lipton published last September laid bare the campaign crafted by Monsanto and other industry players to use the credibility of prominent academics to push the industry's political agenda. That Times article focused primarily on University of Florida academic Kevin Folta, chairman of the university's Horticultural Sciences Department, and Folta's work on behalf of Monsanto. But an examination of recently released email exchanges between Monsanto and Chassy show new depths to the industry efforts.

The collaborations come at a critical juncture in the United States regarding GMO public policy. Mandatory GMO labeling is set to take effect in Vermont on July 1; Congress is wrestling over a federal labeling law for GMOs; and several other states are seeking their own answers to rising consumer demand for transparency about this topic.

Many consumer and environmental groups want to see more restrictions and regulation on GMO crops and the glyphosate herbicide many know as Roundup, which is used on GMOs. But the companies that market the crops and chemicals argue their products are safe and there should be less regulation, not more. Monsanto's roughly \$15 billion in annual revenue comes almost exclusively from GMO crop technology and related chemicals.

Amid the furor, the revelations about corporate collaboration with public university scientists to promote GMOs have sparked a new debate about a lack of transparency in the relationships between academics and industry.

Chassy has said he did nothing unethical or improper in his work supporting Monsanto and the biotech crop industry. “As a public-sector research scientist, it

was expected... that I collaborate with and solicit the engagement of those working in my field of expertise,” Chassy has stated.

Still, what you find when reading through the email chains is an arrangement that allowed industry players to cloak pro-GMO messaging within a veil of independent expertise, and little, if any, public disclosure of the behind-the-scenes connections.

## **CRITICAL COLLABORATIONS**

- ? In a November 2010 email, Monsanto chief of global scientific affairs Eric Sachs tells Chassy that Monsanto has just sent a “gift of \$10,000” to the university “so the funds should be there.” He then tells Chassy he is working on a plan for Monsanto and others in the agribusiness industry to support an “academics review” website that Chassy can use to counter concerns and allegations raised by critics of GMOs. “From my perspective the problem is one of expert engagement and that could be solved by paying experts to provide responses,” Sachs wrote. “The key will be keeping Monsanto in the background so as not to harm the credibility of the information.”
- ? In a separate 2010 exchange, Jay Byrne, president of the v-Fluence public relations firm and former head of corporate communications for Monsanto, tells Chassy he is trying to move the Academics Review project forward. He suggests “we work on the money (for all of us).” Byrne says that he has a list of GMO critics for Academics Review to target. He tells Chassy that the topic areas “mean money for a range of well-heeled corporations.”
- ? In 2011, several emails show Chassy and Monsanto chief of global scientific affairs Eric Sachs, along with others, discussing ways to lobby the Environmental Protection Agency against expanded regulation of biotech crops.
- ? In one email exchange from September 2011, Chassy suggests how the biotech crop industry might “spin” a government study that found significant levels of the chemical glyphosate, the key ingredient in Monsanto’s Roundup herbicide, in air and water samples.
- ? In emails from 2012, Chassy and Monsanto’s Sachs and Monsanto’s John Swarthout, who leads the company’s “scientific outreach and issues management,” discuss an upcoming presentation Chassy is preparing to make in China. They discuss Monsanto’s review of, and changes to, the presentation. Monsanto’s Sachs instructs Swarthout to send slide decks to Chassy as material for his presentation.
- ? In April 2012, Monsanto toxicologist Bruce Hammond asks in an email if short videos can be created about the “safety of GM crops.” Chassy says that he is applying for funding from the State Department and “also seeking other sources of support” and can use university equipment to make the videos. Chassy asks Monsanto’s Hammond for a list of videos

that “you think would be helpful.” Chassy tells Hammond that Byrne’s group V-fluence has helped create and edit the video scenarios.

- ? In separate emails, Monsanto’s Sachs tells Chassy that Monsanto is shooting its own videos” but says “Obviously, independent content from the U of I and supported by US Govt agencies is the preferred approach.” Sachs tells Chassy that Monsanto is happy to help “provide guidance or approaches for additional videos.”

## **EMAILS ABOUT MONEY**

The emails also discuss money.

- ? In an October 2010 email, Chassy tells colleagues at the university that Monsanto has told him it is going to make a “substantial contribution” to his biotech account at the university.
- ? In an October 2011 exchange, Chassy asked Sachs about a contribution for the university foundation biotech fund. The Monsanto executive responded that he would “make a gift to the foundation right away” if it had not already been made. Chassy instructs Monsanto to mail the check to the head of the university’s department of food science and to enclose a letter saying the check is “an unrestricted grant... in support of the biotechnology outreach and education activities of Professor Bruce M. Chassy.”
- ? And in April and May of 2012 Chassy asks Monsanto directly about an expected “deposit.” In one, on May 31, 2012, as he was preparing to begin his retirement on June 30, Chassy wrote Monsanto’s Sachs again asking “is there any way to find out if a check was issued to U of I for me? I don’t see it in my account yet...”
- ? Also in May 2012, Monsanto made a \$250,000 grant to the university to help set up an agricultural communications endowed chair. That donation was just a drop in the bucket of the donations from Monsanto – at least \$1.9 million in the last five years, according to the university, – for agriculture-related projects.

## **CONTINUED CLOSE TIES**

The close ties between Monsanto and Chassy continued past Chassy’s retirement in June 2012 from the university. Through 2013 and 2014 Chassy frequently appeared as an “independent expert” on the GMO Answers website, a pro-GMO site funded by Monsanto and other agribusiness giants. In that role, he answered questions and concerns about GMOs.

Chassy also has continued to operate Academics Review, publishing critical articles about individuals and organizations, including the World Health Organization’s cancer experts, that report information unfavorable for the GMO crop industry. *(I was the subject of at least two such attacks in 2014. Chassy objected to my presentation of both sides of the GMO safety debate in one Reuters*



*article and objected to a second Reuters article that detailed the findings of a USDA report that found both benefits but also concerns associated with GMOs.)*

When asked about its interactions with Chassy, Monsanto has said that there is nothing improper with its “engagements” with “public sector experts,” and that such collaborations help educate the public on important topics. The university also has said it sees nothing wrong with the relations. A university spokeswoman said Chassy has “strong scientific credibility.” She also said that Monsanto has given the university at least \$1.9 million in the last five years.

But others familiar with the issues say the lack of transparency is a problem.

“These revelations regarding the connections are very important,” said George Kimbrell, senior attorney with the Center for Food Safety, a nonprofit consumer advocacy group. “The basic disclosure that some academics and other ‘neutral’ commentators in the public sphere are actually paid operatives/working directly with the chemical industry rightly alarms the public, as they are being misled.”

Revelations similar to these involving University of Florida Professor Kevin Folta’s connections to Monsanto did spark a public backlash after emails showed Folta received an unrestricted \$25,000 grant and told Monsanto he would “write whatever you like.” Folta said in a Jan. 18 blog that he no longer works with Monsanto because of the heated backlash.

Both Chassy and Folta have repeatedly written or been quoted in news articles that failed to disclose their connections to Monsanto and the GMO industry. In a recent example, Chassy has co-authored a series of articles that argue GMO labeling is a “disaster in waiting,” again with no disclosure of his collaboration with GMO developer Monsanto. His co-author is Jon Entine, founder of the PR firm ESG MediaMetrics, whose clients have included Monsanto, a connection Entine does not include in the article.

The revelations in the emails about Chassy, Folta and other assorted academics, leave many questions about who to trust, and how to trust, information critical to understanding our evolving food system. With food labeling issues at the forefront of debate, it’s time for more transparency.

*Carey Gillam has worked as a journalist, researcher and writer specializing in the food and agriculture industry for nearly 20 years and has been recognized as one of the top food and agriculture journalists in the United States, winning several awards for her coverage of the industry. She recently left a career as senior correspondent for the Reuters international news service to become Research Director at U.S. Right to Know, a nonprofit public interest group that works to inform the public about the U.S. food industry and its often-hidden role in public policy.*

Sent from my iPhone