



# How to Uncover the Influence of **Big Food & Big Ag** on Your Campus



By Gary Ruskin and Jordyn Kass  
U.S. Right to Know



There are plenty of reasons to be concerned about our food system. Much of our food is grown and manufactured in ways that undermine our health, damage our environment and climate, mistreat workers who produce and cook our food, and lead to the control of our seeds and our food system by a few powerful corporations.

Interestingly, much of what is wrong with our food system begins, at least in part, in our nation's public universities, which are influential in propagating our food system. Many public universities, university departments, professors and researchers are funded and influenced by the large multinational corporations that are Big Food and Big Ag. In turn, our public universities help generate a food system that is good for corporate profits, but less so for public health, the environment, consumers, workers, justice or democracy. Public universities often teach lessons that are healthy for Big Food/Big Ag profits, but less so for the rest of us. Then students often go out in the world and carry out what they were taught.

Here's the good news: there's a lot you can do to change this. The change starts with asking questions and doing research. Students can carefully research and document the influence of Big Food and Big Ag on campus. Students can uncover and expose corporate corruption, commercialization of the university, and activities that are detrimental to consumers, the environment, public health, education and democracy. Students can publicize their findings in student newspapers, in local newspapers and radio and TV stations, and in cases where the scandals are odious, maybe even national news coverage.

With careful research, you really can improve your food system on campus. That's an impressive accomplishment. But think big. You can do so much more. You can use your university as a leverage point to affect the world around it. For example, by researching what junk food companies do on campus, you could **help win healthier food for consumers**, which might **help alleviate serious public health problems** like the epidemics of obesity and type 2 diabetes. By exposing what the agrichemical companies do on campus, you could **help save the bees from toxic pesticides**. By exposing the ties between Big Ag and researchers at your school, you could **help to foster regenerative agriculture**, which could **help alleviate global warming**. By figuring out where your food really comes from, you **help can win better treatment for workers** in our food system, both in the United States, and maybe in other countries too.

Researching things that matter — and then explaining the meaning of the findings to the broader world — isn't this what students really ought to be doing?

Ultimately, with careful, thorough research, you'll be able to ask deeper questions about your university, about who influences it, who rules, who controls, who decides, and whether it is appropriate for a public university, which is a public trust, to serve the interests of private corporations more than the taxpayers who pay for it.

It is in this spirit that we have written this toolkit on how to lead a transparency movement at your university, to uncover the influence of Big Food and Big Ag.

*“ Think big. You can use your university as a leverage point to affect the world around it. ”*



*In this toolkit, we will lay out some practical ways you can research Big Food/Big Ag on campus, including:*

- What to research
- How to do the research
- University schools and departments to look into
- How to draft public records requests
- Key terms to include in a Freedom of Information (FOI) request
- Where to send your FOI requests
- How to follow the money
- How to obtain corporate research agreements, and what to look for in them
- What to do with the documents/data you receive from an FOI request
- What to do if your FOI request was rejected
- Where to get help and advice
- What to do if you are at a private university
- Further reading: some news articles about Big Food/Big Ag influence on campus
- Appendix: Sample FOI requests

## WHAT TO RESEARCH

*Here's a list of seven areas you might want to research:*

**1. Food and chemical industry financial contributions and other financial dealings with your university.**

Who or what, exactly, is taking money? Is it the university, the university foundation, academic departments, individual professors or researchers? Or something else? Exactly what they are doing in return for the money? Are there written agreements? Is the money being hidden? If so, how?

**2. Has any professor's research been influenced or tainted by the food industry?** Have any professors entered into any unethical research contracts? Are there emails between companies and professors that document the corporate influence?

- 3. What pesticides and herbicides the universities are using on campus.** How much of each product is being used? What are the health risks? Is there fair and timely disclosure of the health risks?
- 4. Are any professors acting as advocates for food or agrichemical companies?** If so, how? Are the companies telling them what to say? Do they work with industry's public relations firms or corporate front groups to defend products? Are the professors being paid for their advocacy?
- 5. Research agreements with Big Food and Big Ag,** to figure out whether professors and researchers are doing science, or just corporate public relations that looks like science.
- 6. Does the university have any contracts for "pouring rights" with soda companies?** If so, are any contractual provisions likely to undermine the health of students, staff or faculty? Are any of the provisions likely to encourage the consumption of sugary sodas? Are any of the provisions likely to promote obesity or type 2 diabetes on campus?
- 7. Food service and dining hall contracts.** What do the contracts say about food sourcing? Where does your university's food come from? How much comes from local farmers? How much comes from large multinational corporations with questionable records on consumer, environmental, public health or labor issues? What labor standards and safeguards, if any, are written into these contracts?





## How to do the research

Of the above seven areas to research, start by picking one or two that you or your group are most interested in. You can do the rest later, if you want.

If you are in a public university, the next step is to draft Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, which are the backbone of how you will do this research.

If you have questions about any part of the research process, feel free to contact Gary Ruskin of U.S. Right to Know ([gary@usrtk.org](mailto:gary@usrtk.org), 415-944-7350) or Jordyn Kass ([kass.jordyn@gmail.com](mailto:kass.jordyn@gmail.com), 847-309-6488).

## What are FOI laws, and why are they important?

Freedom of Information laws allow people to request public documents from federal and state government, including agencies and public universities. Both the federal government and all 50 U.S. states have FOI laws (sometimes referred to as FOIA after the federal Freedom of Information Act law). Canada also has national and provincial FOI laws.

You can use your state's FOI laws to request a wide variety of public university documents, including contributions from corporations and professors' and researchers' emails, to uncover the influence of Big Food/Big Ag on your campus.

## Where to get ideas about which professors and university departments to look into

The nonprofit news organization ProPublica has a great database, called "Dollars for Profs," which has copies of many public university professors, researchers and staff outside income and conflicts of interest statements. You can find the database here: <https://projects.propublica.org/dollars-for-profs>

See also "[Reporting Recipe: How to Investigate Professors' Conflicts of Interest](#)," a great, useful guide by ProPublica's Annie Waldman.

You can look through the disclosures from your university, and see who you think is most likely to receive funding from Big Food/Big Ag. You can FOI your university asking about which professors and

researchers receive the most money from Big Food and Big Ag.

In general, the most interesting professors, researchers and staff are likely to work at agricultural, nutrition, public health and veterinary schools and departments. They are a good place to start, but *do not limit* yourself to these departments if you see something fishy elsewhere.

## How to draft public records requests

See the FOI request examples at the back of this toolkit.

Get state FOI templates for your state and sample state FOI letters from the National Freedom of Information Coalition: <https://www.nfoic.org/organizations/state-sample-foia-request-letters>

To find basic legal resources on state FOI laws, see the Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press: <https://www.rcfp.org/open-government-guide/>

Don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it.



## Key search terms to include in a FOI request

### If you're researching the influence of the agrichemical industry:

Bayer, Monsanto, Bayer CropScience, Syngenta, BASF, Dupont, Pioneer, DowDupont, Dow, Dow AgroSciences, ChemChina, Corteva, GMO Answers, Genetic Literacy Project, Biotechnology Innovation Organization, Council for Biotechnology Information, Fleishman Hillard, FTI Consulting, Ketchum.



### If you're researching the influence of the ultra-processed/junk food industry:

Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, International Life Sciences Institute, International Life Sciences Institute North America, American Beverage Association, Grocery Manufacturers Association, Consumer Brands Association, Nestle, Mars, Kraft Heinz, Mondelez, Unilever, General Mills, Kellogg's, Ajinomoto, Hershey, Kellen, International Food Information Council, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.



### If you're researching the influence of the agribusiness industry:

Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge, JBS, Tyson, Smithfield, Hormel, Sysco, National Beef Packing, Perdue Farms.

The above are good search terms to start with. But, if you notice a company has a lot of influence on your campus, include them on the list. You can include as many key terms on your request as you deem appropriate. However, keep in mind that the school may deny the request as "unduly burdensome" if there are a lot of responsive records. You can get around this by limiting the key terms and/or the time period.

See the appendix for examples of FOI requests related to the agrichemical and ultra-processed/junk food industries.







When companies give to universities, they often prefer to give through the university foundation, because this can provide a layer of secrecy. Many university foundations are exempt from state FOI.

One good way to start following the money is to make an FOI request to your university, asking for all contributions to the university and its foundation, and then include as keywords the lists of companies and organization mentioned above. A "follow the money" FOI request may help you to identify professors, researchers, departments and entities worthy of further investigation.

If you're having trouble following the money, ask for help. And see the appendix FOI samples 4 and 5 for "follow the money" templates.

### *Where to send your FOI requests*

Most public universities have web pages that explain where you should email or send FOI requests. You can search for these on Google. But if you can't figure out where to email or send your FOI request, send it to your university's chief legal officer, who often has a title like "general counsel" or "university counsel" or "vice president for legal affairs." When sending an FOI request, it never hurts to send a CC to the university's chief legal officer.

### *How to follow the money*

During the Watergate scandal, the whistleblower Deep Throat told the Washington Post journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein to "follow the money." It was good advice then, and it still is today.

Tracking corporate money flows on campus is a great way to unearth the corporate influence. But companies and trade associations can contribute money in a variety of ways, some of which may not be easy to track, especially if your university wants to hide them.

Companies can give money directly to a university, to a school within a university, to a specific university department, to a specific professor or staff person, or to a university foundation. To find the corporate money, sometimes you have to inquire about many or all of these to find the corporate money.

### *How to obtain corporate research agreements, and what to look for in them*

Corporate research agreements with universities or researchers can be telling. And fascinating. They can disclose whether professors and researchers are doing legitimate, independent science, or just corporate public relations that is dressed up as science.

You can sometimes obtain corporate research agreements by sending FOIs to professors who are leading or participating in a corporate-funded study.

What should you look for in the agreements? Really, anything that looks like professors and researchers are helping to deliver predetermined results that are good for the profits of the corporation or trade association that is sponsoring the research. For some examples of what to look for in research agreements, see:

- Journal of Public Health Policy: ["Always read the small print": a case study of commercial research funding, disclosure and agreements with Coca-Cola](#), by Sarah Steele, Gary Ruskin and Martin McKee
- BMJ: [Coca-Cola contracts could allow it to "quash" unfavourable research findings](#), by Elizabeth Mahase
- Inverse: [University Records Reveal Coca-Cola's Immense Power Over Health Research](#), by Peter Hess
- [Unsavoury Truth](#), by [Marion Nestle](#)

## *What to do with the documents/data you receive from an FOI request*

1. Put them in a dropbox folder
2. Give others on your campus team access to the folder
3. Read the FOI documents, and ask your friends and colleagues to read them too. More eyes are better.
4. Take notes. When reviewing FOIs, take brief notes of important things you find in the document review, especially passages that look especially intriguing, or show corporate influence, corruption, scandal or wrongdoing. Include a page number and short description or quote.
5. If you find leads to other interesting documents, do follow up FOI requests. Often it's the follow-up FOIs that are the goldmine.
6. Track your FOI requests and responses in a spreadsheet, so that you can check whether your university is complying with – or ditching -- your requests.
7. Follow up with the FOI contacts on campus if they are slow or late in filling your request.
8. Please share your documents or dropbox folder, as well as your notes on the documents, with Gary Ruskin of U.S. Right to Know ([gary@usrtk.org](mailto:gary@usrtk.org)), who has experience in reading FOI documents. He can help you identify what is significant in the documents.

## *What to do if your FOI request was rejected*

First, look to the reason(s) the university provided you in rejecting your FOIA. Sometimes they will reject a request for being “unduly burdensome.” When this happens, you’ll have the opportunity to narrow your request. You can narrow your request by limiting the key terms you included or shortening the time period of documents you requested. They may even specify how they’d like you to narrow it. If you must limit your

request, you can always send a follow-up request seeking the key terms or time periods you had to leave out of your first request.

Sometimes your request will return no responsive records. Don’t get discouraged. Look into other departments, offices, professors, administrative offices, entities, etc. to find Big Food and Big Ag’s influence on your campus.

If you have good reason to believe that your request should have returned responsive records, but was denied, look to see if your state has an FOI appeal process. Some states allow you to appeal to an independent agency within a certain amount of days after receiving a denial. If you choose to go this route, be prepared to have a sound explanation as to why you believe your request was wrongly denied.

## *Where to get help and advice*

What do I do if I have problems or hit roadblocks?

U.S. Right to Know is here to help you with advice and guidance at all stages of the research process. If you have questions, or need help, contact Gary Ruskin ([gary@usrtk.org](mailto:gary@usrtk.org), 415-944-7350) or Jordyn Kass ([kass.jordyn@gmail.com](mailto:kass.jordyn@gmail.com), 847-309-6488). We can also give presentations to your group about how to get started, and what to do next.

If you have specific legal questions about state FOI, contact the National Freedom of Information Coalition state FOI contact for your state. See:

<https://www.nfoic.org/organizations/state-foi-resources>

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press also has a hotline for anyone who has questions about state or federal FOI requests. The hotline number is (800) 336-4243. You can also email RCFP at [hotline@rcfp.org](mailto:hotline@rcfp.org).

If you are a student journalist, the Student Press Law Center may be able to help you. See: <https://splc.org/legalrequest/>

Other organizations that may be helpful to you are: [Herbicide Free Campus](#), [Real Food Generation](#), [Sierra Club](#), and [Uprooted and Rising](#).

## Other Helpful Practice Tips

- Deadlines! State FOI laws provide a deadline for how soon the university administration must answer the FOI, but in some cases they can request an extension within that deadline. Keep track of upcoming deadlines to ensure they fulfill your request. In some cases, if they don't meet the deadline, the school may waive their right to reject a document for being "unduly burdensome."
- Sign your name and your affiliation with the university on your FOI request. Although not required, it adds a powerful statement to your request.
  - ▶ Example: Jordyn Kass, University of Illinois Class of 2017
- Be polite to those fulfilling your request. But don't let them push you around.
- It's difficult to know when your request is too broad or burdensome until you get a denial. Sometimes it's best to include a bunch of terms and a short time period (i.e., 1 year) and then follow up with more specific requests depending on what you find. Other times, if you know 1 or 2 corporations have a huge influence somewhere, it may be useful to include just those terms and a longer time period. Don't be afraid to narrow your request, because you can always send a follow-up at a later time.
- When you get a batch of documents following a request, there will often be repetitive email threads. Depending on how the batch of documents is organized, it's sometimes best to read in reverse chronological order.

## What to do if you are at a private university

Private universities are not subject to state FOI laws, so you cannot use FOI to directly uncover private university documents. But there are still plenty of things you can do. You can write to the head of your university, or other relevant administrators, asking for many of the kinds of documents we have discussed above. The main idea is to begin a discussion about what documents should be available to the students, who are the backbone and most important part of any private university. And then to press for transparency about the influence of Big Food/Big Ag on campus.





## *For further reading: some articles about Big Food/Big Ag influence on campus*

1. New York Times: [Food Industry Enlisted Academics in G.M.O. Lobbying War, Emails Show](#), by Eric Lipton
2. Boston Globe: [Harvard professor failed to disclose connection](#), by Laura Krantz
3. The Intercept: [The playbook for poisoning the earth](#), by Lee Fang
4. BMJ: [Coca-Cola's secret influence on medical and science journalists](#). A series of journalism conferences on obesity received covert funding from Coca-Cola, by Paul Thacker
5. WBEZ: [Why Didn't An Illinois Professor Have To Disclose GMO Funding?](#) By Monica Eng
6. New York Times: [A Shadowy Industry Group Shapes Food Policy Around the World](#), by Andrew Jacobs
7. Mother Jones: [These Emails Show Monsanto Leaning on Professors to Fight the GMO PR War](#), by Tom Philpott
8. BMJ: [Coca-Cola contracts could allow it to "quash" unfavourable research findings](#), by Elizabeth Mahase
9. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: [University of Saskatchewan professor says there's nothing unusual about his ties to Monsanto](#), and [U of S defends prof's Monsanto ties, but some faculty disagree](#), by Jason Warick
10. Freedom of the Press Foundation: [How corporations suppress disclosure of public records about themselves](#), by Camille Fassett
11. The Progressive: [Flacking for GMOs: How the Biotech Industry Cultivates Positive Media—and Discourages Criticism](#), by Paul Thacker.
12. San Diego Union-Tribune: [UCSD hires Coke-funded health researcher](#), by Morgan Cook
13. Environmental Health News: [Coca-Cola's "war" with the public health community](#), by Gary Ruskin
14. Global News: [Documents reveal Canadian teenager target of GMO lobby](#), by Allison Vuchnich
15. Inverse: [University Records Reveal Coca-Cola's Immense Power Over Health Research](#), by Peter Hess
16. Columbia Journalism Review: [How university foundations try to avoid public scrutiny—and what reporters can do](#)

## *Some U.S. Right to Know web pages that may be useful:*

17. [Our Investigations](#)
18. [10 Revelations from the U.S. Right to Know Investigations](#)
19. [Top Findings of the U.S. Right To Know Investigations](#)
20. [Tracking the Agrichemical Industry Propaganda Network](#)
21. [Academic work](#)
22. [The misleading and deceitful ways of Dr. Kevin Folta](#)
23. [Academics Review: The Making of a Monsanto Front Group](#)



## **APPENDIX: SAMPLE FOI REQUESTS**

Following are sample FOI requests that you can use as templates, and adapt for your own university and state FOI laws.

### **SAMPLE #1:**

October 17, 2018

Kristen Erving  
Senior Paralegal Specialist  
University of California, Riverside  
900 University Avenue  
3144 Hinderaker Hall  
Riverside, CA 92521

**RE: California Public Records Act Request Regarding Dr. David Eastmond**

Dear Ms. Erving:

This is a request under the California Public Records Act seeking the production of documents. I request a complete and thorough search of all filing systems and locations for all records maintained by the University of California pertaining to Dr. David A. Eastmond, professor and toxicologist in the Department of Molecular, Cell and Systems Biology at the University of California, Riverside.

This request seeks all email and email attachments to or from Dr. Eastmond (including to, from, CC, BCC and all attachments) with any staff or employees of any of the following corporations or organizations:

- Monsanto
- Syngenta
- Bayer or Bayer CropScience
- BASF
- DuPont or Pioneer
- Dow or Dow AgroSciences
- Corteva
- Ketchum
- GMO Answers
- Biotechnology Industry Organization
- Council for Biotechnology Information
- Genetic Literacy Project
- ESG MediaMetrics
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Also, we request all emails or email attachments to, from, CC or BCC any of the following persons:

- Jon Entine (jon@jonentine.com)
- Nina Federoff
- Bruce Chassy
- Kevin Folta
- Calestous Juma
- Henry Miller
- Jay Byrne
- Mark Lynas
- Sarah Evanega
- Cami Ryan
- Peter Phillips
- Alison Van Eenennaam
- Tamar Haspel
- Alan McHughen



The time period covered by this request is from January 1, 2012 to the present.

I request that you disclose these documents and materials as they become available to you, without waiting until all the documents have been assembled.

If documents are denied in whole or in part, please specify which exemption(s) is (are) claimed for each passage or whole document denied. Give the number of pages in each document and the total number of pages pertaining to this request and the dates of documents withheld. I request that excised material be "blacked out" rather than "whited out" or cut out and that the remaining non-exempt portions of documents be released as provided under the California Public Records Act.

Please advise of any destruction of records and include the date of and authority for such destruction. As I expect to appeal any denials, please specify the office and address to which an appeal should be directed.

I am making this request on behalf of U.S. Right to Know, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit food research organization. The records disclosed pursuant to this request will be used in the preparation of articles for dissemination to the public. Accordingly, I request that you waive all fees in the public interest because furnishing of the information sought by this request will primarily benefit the public. Please email the documents to me at [gary@usrtk.org](mailto:gary@usrtk.org).

I can be reached at (415) 944-7350. Please call rather than write if there are any questions or if you need additional information from me.

Thank you for your help in filling this request.

Sincerely,



## SAMPLE #2:

December 22, 2016

Susan McKinney  
University of Minnesota  
Office of the General Counsel  
360 McNamara Alumni Ctr  
200 Oak Street SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

**RE: Minnesota Government Data Practices Act Request Regarding Joanne L. Slavin**

Dear Ms. McKinney:

This is a request under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act seeking the production of documents. I request a complete and thorough search of all filing systems and locations for all records maintained by the University of Minnesota pertaining to Joanne L. Slavin, professor in the Department of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Minnesota.

This request seeks all email correspondence -- including email attachments -- to or from or CC or BCC Professor Slavin containing any of the following keywords:

- International Life Sciences Institute
- International Life Sciences Institute North America
- ILSI North America
- ILSI NA
- ILSI
- Tate and Lyle or Tate & Lyle
- Coca-Cola
- Coke
- PepsiCo
- Pepsi
- Nestle

The time period covered by this request is from January 1, 2014 to the present.

This request does not include any published materials or other widely-available materials, such as organizational newsletters, journal articles, etc.

I request that you disclose these documents and materials as they become available to you, without waiting until all the documents have been assembled.

If documents are denied in whole or in part, please specify which exemption(s) is (are) claimed for each passage or whole document denied. Give the number of pages in each document and the total number of pages pertaining to this request and the dates of documents withheld. I request that excised material be "blackened out" rather than "whited out" or cut out and that the remaining non-exempt portions of documents be released as provided under the Alabama Open Records Law. Please send a memo (with a copy or copies to me) to the appropriate unit(s) in your office to assure that no records related to this request are destroyed.

Please advise of any destruction of records and include the date of and authority for such destruction. As I expect to appeal any denials, please specify the office and address to which an appeal should be directed.

I am making this request on behalf of U.S. Right to Know, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit food research organization. The records disclosed pursuant to this request will be used in the preparation of articles for dissemination to the public. Accordingly, I request that you waive all fees in the public interest because furnishing of the information sought by this request will primarily benefit the public. Please send the documents to me in PDF format to [gary@usrtk.org](mailto:gary@usrtk.org).

I can be reached at (415) 944-7350. Please call rather than write if there are any questions or if you need additional information from me.

Thank you so much for your help in filling this request.



## SAMPLE #3:

R. Cooper Shattuck  
The University of Alabama System  
500 University Boulevard East  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

**RE: Alabama Public Records Law Request Regarding Professor David B. Allison**

Dear Mr. Shattuck:

This is a request under the Alabama Public Records Law seeking the production of documents. I request a complete and thorough search of all filing systems and locations for all records maintained by the University of Alabama pertaining to David B. Allison, Quetelet Endowed Professor of Public Health at the University of Alabama School of Public Health.

This request seeks all email – including attachments -- to or from Professor Allison that is to, from, CC or BCC any staff or employees of the following corporations or organizations:

- Coca-Cola Co.
- PepsiCo Inc.
- American Beverage Association
- International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI)
- Frito-Lay Inc.
- William Wrigley Jr. Co.
- Calorie Control Council
- Kellen Co.
- McDonald's Corp.
- Mars Inc.

I request that you narrow the search such that it does not include any scientific publications in their final published form.

The time period covered by this request is from January 1, 2013 to the present.

I request that you disclose these documents and materials as they become available to you, without waiting until all the documents have been assembled.

If documents are denied in whole or in part, please specify which exemption(s) is (are) claimed for each passage or whole document denied. Give the number of pages in each document and the total number of pages pertaining to this request and the dates of documents withheld. I request that excised material be "blackened out" rather than "whited out" or cut out and that the remaining non-exempt portions of documents be released as provided under the Alabama Public Records Law.

Please advise of any destruction of records and include the date of and authority for such destruction. As I expect to appeal any denials, please specify the office and address to which an appeal should be directed.

I am making this request on behalf of U.S. Right to Know, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit food research organization. The records disclosed pursuant to this request will be used in the preparation of articles for dissemination to the public. Accordingly, I request that you waive all fees in the public interest because furnishing of the information sought by this request will primarily benefit the public. Please send the documents to me at Gary Ruskin; U.S. Right to Know; 6026A Harwood Ave; Oakland, CA 94618.

I can be reached at (415) 944-7350. Please call rather than write if there are any questions or if you need additional information from me.

Thank you so much for your help in filling this request.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE #4

May 23, 2016

Abby K. Daniels  
Public Records Office  
Legal Services Coordinator  
Purdue University  
Hovde Hall, Room 217  
West Lafayette, IN 47907

**RE: Public Records Request Regarding Funding from Agrichemical Industry**

Dear Ms. Daniels:

Pursuant to the Indiana Access to Public Records Act, I request that you send electronic copies of each of the following documents, which are in possession of or generated by Purdue University.

- 1) Information on all grants, contributions or funding of Purdue University or the Purdue Foundation by any of the following companies: Monsanto, Syngenta, Dow, DuPont, Bayer or BASF.

The time period covered by this request is from January 1, 2013 to the present.

I request that you disclose these documents and materials as they become available to you, without waiting until all the documents have been assembled.

If documents are denied in whole or in part, please specify which exemption(s) is (are) claimed for each passage or whole document denied. Give the number of pages in each document and the total number of pages pertaining to this request and the dates of documents withheld. I request that excised material be "blackened out" rather than "whited out" or cut out and that the remaining non-exempt portions of documents be released as provided under the Indiana Access to Public Records Act. Please send a memo (with a copy or copies to me) to the appropriate unit(s) in your office to assure that no records related to this request are destroyed.

Please advise of any destruction of records and include the date of and authority for such destruction. As I expect to appeal any denials, please specify the office and address to which an appeal should be directed.

I am making this request on behalf of U.S. Right to Know, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit food research organization. The records disclosed pursuant to this request will be used in the preparation of articles for dissemination to the public. Accordingly, I request that you waive all fees in the public interest because furnishing of the information sought by this request will primarily benefit the public. Please send the documents to me at Gary Ruskin; U.S. Right to Know; 6026A Harwood Ave; Oakland, CA 94618.

I can be reached at (415) 944-7350. Please call rather than write if there are any questions or if you need additional information from me.

Thank you so much for your help in filling this request.

Sincerely,



## SAMPLE #5:

February 14, 2020

Thomas P. Hardy  
108 Henry Administration Building  
506 South Wright St, MC-370  
Urbana, IL 61801

**RE: Freedom of Information Act request regarding information about corporate contributions to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.**

Dear Mr. Hardy:

This is a request under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act seeking the production of documents and records. I request you provide a dataset of contributions since January 1, 2014 made by any of the following corporations or organizations:

- Monsanto Innovation Center
- Monsanto
- Syngenta
- Bayer or Bayer CropScience
- BASF
- DuPont or Pioneer
- Dow or Dow AgroSciences
- DowDupont
- Corteva
- ChemChina
- Ketchum
- GMO Answers
- Biotechnology Innovation Organization
- Council for Biotechnology Information
- Grocery Manufacturers Association
- Fleishman Hillard
- FTI Consulting

For each organization's contribution, I request that you provide the amount of money given to the University, the date of the contribution(s), and the purposes for which the money was or will be used for. If a contribution was designated for a specific school or department within the university, please specify which school or department received the funds.

I request that you disclose these documents and materials as they become available to you, without waiting until all the documents have been assembled.

If documents are denied in whole or in part, please specify which exemption(s) is (are) claimed for each passage or whole document denied. Give the number of pages in each document and the total number of pages pertaining to this request and the dates of documents withheld. I request that excised material be "blacked out" rather than "whited out" or cut out and that the remaining non-exempt portions of documents be released as provided under the Freedom of Information Act. As I expect to appeal any denials, please specify the office and address to which an appeal should be directed.

I am making this request on behalf of U.S. Right to Know, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit food research organization. The records disclosed pursuant to this request will be used in the preparation of articles for dissemination to the public. Accordingly, I request that you waive all fees in the public interest because furnishing of the information sought by this request will primarily benefit the public. Please send the documents to me in PDF format at [kass.jordyn@gmail.com](mailto:kass.jordyn@gmail.com).

I can be reached at (847) 309-6488. Please call rather than write if there are any questions or if you need additional information from me.

Thank you so much for your help in filling this request.

## **SAMPLE 6:**

Thomas P. Hardy  
108 Henry Administration Building  
506 South Wright St, MC-370  
Urbana, IL 61801

**RE: Freedom of Information Act request seeking any contracts between the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and soft-drink companies.**

Dear Mr. Hardy:

This is a two-part request under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act seeking the production of documents and records.

**Part 1:** This FOIA requests seeks all contracts between the University of Illinois and any of the following organizations:

- PepsiCo
- Coca-Cola Company
- Tropicana
- Keurig Dr. Pepper

If you are unable to provide any contractual documents due to a valid exemption, please provide a dataset containing each corporation contracted, the length of the pouring-rights contract, and the amount of money the corporation pays the University of Illinois under the contract.

**Part 2:** This FOIA request seeks all correspondence (records including letters, emails, email attachments, transcribed voicemails, etc.) to or the University of Illinois to or from the following organizations pertaining to the right to sell soda at the University.

The time period covered for this request is from January 1, 2014 to the present.

I request that you disclose these documents and materials as they become available to you, without waiting until all the documents have been assembled.

If documents are denied in whole or in part, please specify which exemption(s) is (are) claimed for each passage or whole document denied. Give the number of pages in each document and the total number of pages pertaining to this request and the dates of documents withheld. I request that excised material be "blackened out" rather than "whited out" or cut out and that the remaining non-exempt portions of documents be released as provided under the Freedom of Information Act. As I expect to appeal any denials, please specify the office and address to which an appeal should be directed.

I am making this request on behalf of U.S. Right to Know, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit food research organization. The records disclosed pursuant to this request will be used in the preparation of articles for dissemination to the public. Accordingly, I request that you waive all fees in the public interest because furnishing of the information sought by this request will primarily benefit the public. Please send the documents to me in PDF format at [kass.jordyn@gmail.com](mailto:kass.jordyn@gmail.com).

I can be reached at (847) 309-6488. Please call rather than write if there are any questions or if you need additional information from me.

Thank you so much for your help in filling this request.

Sincerely,

Jordyn Kass  
University of Illinois, Class of 2017



