

The Food Rights Network
A Project of the Center for Media and Democracy
520 University Avenue, Suite 260
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 260-9713

Sent Via Email and FedEx

April 26, 2011

Debbie Levin, President
Environmental Media Association (EMA)
5979 W. 3rd Street, Ste. 204
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Dear Debbie:

Thank you for your April 21st email response to our letter of March 31st.

In our letter we informed you, Norman Lear, and Ed Begley, Jr. -- president, founder, and board member, respectively, of the Environmental Media Association -- that based on your website, press and media accounts EMA has been putting sewage sludge on your "organic" schoolyard gardens, making them NOT organic. Sewage sludge is a contaminated waste product forbidden under the National Organic Standards Act.

We informed you that your corporate partner, Kellogg Garden Products, sells unlabeled sewage sludge masquerading as "compost" as their major business activity. We pointed out that "although there is no label or information on the bags that would provide the purchaser with this critically important information, about 70% of Kellogg's total annual sales is derived from sewage sludge based products."

In your April 21st response to us, which you also emailed to Hugh Kaufman, the most experienced federal EPA official on these issues, you asserted that the Food Rights Network is "in an ongoing investigation of Kellogg Garden Products" and that we have an "extremely passionate campaign against Kellogg." That is not accurate. As we originally wrote you "we have been investigating how, across the nation, sewage sludge is being dumped on farms and gardens, deceptively labeled as 'organic compost,' 'natural fertilizer,' or sometimes the PR term 'biosolids'. ... Sewage sludge is hazardous material containing tens of thousands of contaminants" including "Dioxins, PCBs, medical wastes, industrial solvents and chemicals, heavy metals, endocrine disruptors, flame retardants, and pathogens."

Our purpose was warning you that "the sludge industry and sludge promoters have greenwashed sewage sludge . . . branding it as 'compost' and 'natural organic fertilizer.'" We expected that once informed of these facts EMA would take quick measures to protect the children, and to protect the integrity and good name of both your organization and its many respected environmental celebrities such as Norman Lear, Ed Begley, Jr., and Rosario Dawson. Sadly, these good folks were some of the public names and faces of your fake organic school gardens. Unfortunately, your April 21st email shows that EMA itself may be devolving into a greenwasher of sewage sludge, misleading the public by lending your own green brand to hidden sewage sludge products made from hazardous industrial, commercial, hospital and human waste.

You wrote that EMA's mission "is to utilize the media and entertainment figures to role model sustainable lifestyle choices." The very valuable free media that EMA's celebrities provide Kellogg Garden Products undermines "sustainable choices" because there is no label on these products stating they contain sewage sludge. Your co-branding EMA with Kellogg Garden Products greenwashes its main business of selling sewage waste and deceives people who unknowingly buy garden products made from sludge, having seen the Kellogg brand closely associated with your organization.

You stated that "EMA is always transparent in our work," but it is not transparency to fool people into unknowingly putting sewage sludge on their gardens. That is the exact opposite of transparency, but the very definition greenwashing.

While it may be in the financial interest of the Kellogg brand to appear "green" by introducing some organic products, calling its sewage sludge products "compost," and associating with EMA, it is not in EMA's core mission as a role model on the environment to be Kellogg's greenwasher. Kellogg's representative posed for pictures with kids and celebrities with sewage sludge products at your fake organic gardens. She knows that bags of Amend, Gromulch and Harvest Supreme are not organic, but the stars and kids did not.

Shockingly, you assert in your April 21st email to us that "the EMA School Garden Program has never claimed to be 'organic.' " This is a total fabrication. The EMA website is replete with only references to your gardens as organic. Even your funding appeals for corporate and public donations describe EMA's schoolyard gardens as only organic. Finally and most shockingly, the day after you wrote this false statement that you "never claimed" the gardens organic, an EMA celebrity was on E! Online extolling your organic gardens. These and other references are documented on SourceWatch, at [http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Environmental Media Association](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Environmental_Media_Association).

Again, let us be clear. We are not alleging that Kellogg Garden Products is violating any existing law or regulation when it deceptively markets sewage sludge as "compost," "fertilizer" or "soil amendment." Unfortunately, there exists no truth in advertising law or toxics warning act that requires them to state on their bags what is the truth: "this product is derived from sewage sludge." That is exactly our complaint: there is no warning label, and EMA is helping Kellogg and the entire sewage industry nationwide to greenwash sludge and to promote that food be unknowingly grown in it.

Greenwashing is a sin of omission and commission. The omission is that no one is informing gardeners, schools, and families that Kellogg's Amend, Nitrohumus, Topper, and Gromulch contain sewage sludge. The commission is that EMA is using its good environmental name, and its celebrities and their reputations, to greenwash this sewage industry marketing scam.

As noted in the "Organic" video on EMA's website, "Every time you choose an organic over a conventional food you are making a choice You are putting your environmental protection up front." EMA should not let its environmental reputation be used by a company and industry whose main business is selling sewage sludge as "compost," denying parents and their children an informed choice about putting sewage sludge into their vegetable gardens and their environment.

The only responsible way to stop this greenwashing is to end EMA's association with Kellogg Garden Products or any other sewage sludge industry partner, unless and until they come clean and put an obvious and honest label on their bags of "compost" reading: "This product is derived from sewage sludge."

Accordingly, we are asking you to stand against greenwashing instead of continuing to aid Kellogg and this sludge marketing scam. Continued partnering with Kellogg or other sewage sludge industry companies under these circumstances is nothing less than classic greenwashing.

We respectfully request that EMA please take these actions:

1. Stop the greenwashing;
2. Tell the schools, the school kids, their parents and the EMA mentoring celebrities that the gardens may be contaminated with hazardous materials;
3. Remediate any contamination in the gardens;
4. Use only safe organic products in the gardens after remediation; and,

5. Update your website claims to reflect this reality.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests to protect the kids, the public, and the reputations of EMA and its well-intended celebrities.

Sincerely,



John Stauber, co-author, *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You*;
Adviser to Food Rights Network, a project of the Center for Media and Democracy



Lisa Graves, Executive Director, Center for Media and Democracy

cc: Norman Lear; Ed Begley, Jr.; Hugh Kaufman, US EPA; Rosario Dawson

Attached below: Email Exchange, Debbie Levin & Hugh Kaufman, 4/21/11

From: <hughbkaufman@comcast.net>

Date: Thu, Apr 21, 2011 at 1:14 PM

Subject: Re: Ed Begley, Jr. / Growing food on toxic sludge in minority schoolyards / Kellogg products / etc.

To: Debbie Levin <debbie@ema-online.org>

Cc: Ed Begley <ed@edbegley.com>, Greg Baldwin <greg@ema-online.org>, John Stauber <john.stauber@gmail.com>, Regina Markey <rmarkey@beinsaxelrod.com>, Jeff Ruch <jruch@peer.org>, Paula Dinerstein <pdinerstein@peer.org>

Hi Debbie,

Nice to meet you via email. I'm sorry we've never met or communicated in any way in the past.

I'm a little confused by your email. Ed Begley, Jr. just called me and told me that he wants me to continue to communicate with him on the sewage sludge issues that you discuss (we've been friends for probably 30+ years). Thus, unless you can prove to me that you have Mr. Begley's power of attorney, I will continue to follow his wishes on this matter.

With regards to your false assertion that I have an "extremely passionate campaign against Kellogg," I have no such campaign. I don't know Kellogg from the man in the moon. I do, however, oppose growing food on sewage sludge. In fact Sony, Tristar, Michael Moore, and I were sued by companies' affiliated with the Luchese crime family on that issue almost 20 years ago. We won that suit.

With regards to your assertion that the "EMA School garden program has never claimed to be 'organic,'" I

think the record shows that you are mistaken:

<http://www.ema-online.org/contact_donate_school_gardens.php>

Thus, your email statement may be prima facie evidence that EMA's solicitation of funds to create "organic gardens" is fraudulent.

Warmest Regards, Hugh B. Kaufman

----- Original Message -----

From: "Debbie Levin" <debbie@ema-online.org>

To: "john stauber" <john.stauber@gmail.com>, hughbkaufman@comcast.net

Cc: "Ed Begley" <ed@edbegley.com>, "Greg Baldwin" <greg@ema-online.org>

Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2011 12:47:19 PM

Subject: Kellogg products

Dear John and Hugh,

I have become aware though my friend, Ed Begley that you are in an ongoing investigation of Kellogg Garden Products. We met that company through Gary Petersen who is one of California's leading environmental policy and corporate advisory leaders for the last 40 years. EMA is a messaging organization. Our mission is to utilize the media and entertainment figures to role model sustainable lifestyle choices. We are not a certification organization.

We work very closely with large corporations helping to promote their "green" products and initiatives in order to encourage other companies (large and small) that "green business" is "good business.

Although, I cannot comment on the content of your extremely passionate campaign against Kellogg, I can refer this to EMA's close advisors at Green Seal in DC. Dr. Arthur Weissman is a dear friend and very attentive associate of the EMA programs. I will send your information immediately to Dr. Weissman and his team at Green Seal to verify your information and/or dispute it.

I will ask you to immediately discontinue your emails to Ed and the public campaign against EMA's Garden Program until proper channels (via Green Seal) are completed. EMA is always transparent in our work and do not claim to work with only 100% organic and or sustainable corporations. As I said, we hope to work within mainstream business to encourage them to do more and more environmental products and environmental corporate practices.

The EMA School Garden Program has never claimed to be "organic." Our order to Kellogg was to use their organic gardening products with the desire to work with the schools to be "organically grown." I am very aware of the organic farming laws (Bob Scowcroft, recently retired CEO of OFRF) has been a close friend and advisor for nearly 12 years. This is an area that I'm deeply connected to.

As an organization that deals with press in an ongoing basis, I would ask for your respect to our 22 year history and afford us the time to consult with our expert advisors before you continue to unilaterally condemn a program that has been successful and inspirational.

Warmest Regards,

Debbie Levin

President

Environmental Media Association

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