

Organic Activists' New Conspiracy: Pesticides Cause School Shootings



By Alex Berezow — April 17, 2018



Credit: Storyblocks [1]

One of the problems with science communication is that we are always a day or two behind the mass media. The general pattern is this:

1. Bad research is published or a crazy person makes a crazy claim.
2. The mass media gets a hold of it, and broadcasts it all over the world.
3. Sane people are alerted to this nonsense, who then have to craft an evidence-based response. That takes a substantial amount of time and effort and, as a result, a lie circles the globe before the truth gets its shoes on.

A preemptive solution is ideal. Science communicators should hunt down kooky conspiracies, then take them behind the barn and shoot them before they have the opportunity to gain a substantial following. But here's the catch: How does one identify which deranged conspiracy theories will go viral? There are more lies than there are hours in the day to debunk them.

The best (as in, the most viral) conspiracies engage people's emotions. They also tend to invoke some, big mysterious force (be it corporations or the government) manipulating or otherwise harming people for the sake of power or profit. Given those criteria, we should nip in the bud a potentially new viral conspiracy theory: Pesticides are causing school shootings.

Organic Food Activists Blame School Shootings on Pesticides

A crackpot named E. G. Vallianatos has written a [blog post](#) [2] that links pesticides to school shootings. He says, "[Pesticides] may have something to do with the mass-shootings [sic] in schools all over America because some of them are neurotoxins." He claims that the chemical

industry's pesticides make children stupid and violent, and the government acts as an accomplice. His solution, of course, is to eat only organic food.

This nonsense probably would have remained in total obscurity were it not for the fact that it was reprinted, in part, by the [Organic Consumers Association](#) [3] (OCA) -- a group of conspiracy theorists that has been cited as a source by outlets such as the [New York Times](#) [4].

What does the OCA believe? In addition to being vehemently anti-GMO, the OCA also [publishes anti-vaccine propaganda](#) [5], [promotes alternative medicine](#) [6], [lies about nuclear power](#) [7], and peddles all sorts of conspiracy theories, including [9/11 trutherism](#) [8], [chemtrails](#) [9], and [FEMA's secret plan to implement martial law](#) [10]. The head of the OCA is Ronnie Cummins, a man who has no moral qualms about doing interviews on the [Russian propaganda network, RT](#) [11].

OCA is also behind U.S. Right to Know, the organization that lies about GMOs and endorses mandatory labels. They have engaged in [smear and cyberbullying campaigns against scientists](#) [12] (including me, your humble correspondent, who they tried to prevent from being published in *USA Today*, where I serve on the Board of Contributors).

In short, the Organic Consumers Association is a group of dangerous frauds who are entirely unhinged from reality. Yet, they have fooled gullible and politically sympathetic journalists into believing they are somehow a respectable organization when it comes to food science. That's why this conspiracy needs to be addressed.

No, Pesticides Don't Cause School Shootings

The following are facts:

1. Both conventional and organic agriculture use pesticides. The only difference is the type of pesticide that each uses. Organic food activists want you to believe that their food is pesticide-free, but that is a gigantic lie. [Organic farms use pesticides](#) [13].
2. Both conventional and organic farms use pesticides at safe levels.
3. Even if agriculture didn't use pesticides, you would still consume pesticides. Why? Because [99.99% of the pesticides you eat are made by the plants themselves](#) [14].

Ergo, pesticides don't cause school shootings, and eating organic food won't prevent school shootings. The only thing eating organic food will prevent you from doing is keeping too much cash in your wallet.

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- [1] <https://www.storyblocks.com/stock-image/halloween-alien-card-in-vector-format-sqwl1em87dzj6gq2yxd>
[2] <https://vallianatos.blogspot.com/2018/04/pesticides-are-making-children.html>
[3] <https://www.organicconsumers.org/news/pesticides-are-making-children-aggressive>
[4] <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/25/dining/ben-and-jerrys-ice-cream-herbicide-glyphosate.html>

- [5] <https://www.organicconsumers.org/news/no-historical-benefit-vaccines-polish-study>
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- [13] https://www.realclearscience.com/blog/2014/06/the_biggest_myth_about_organic_farming.html
- [14] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/06/13/9999-pesticides-we-eat-are-produced-plants-themselves-11415>