

Who Owns Organic Now? The Corporate Takeover of Organics by the Big GMO Food Conglomerates

New Info Graphic

By [Global Research News](#)

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[cornucopia.org](http://www.cornucopia.org)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#), [Global Economy](#)

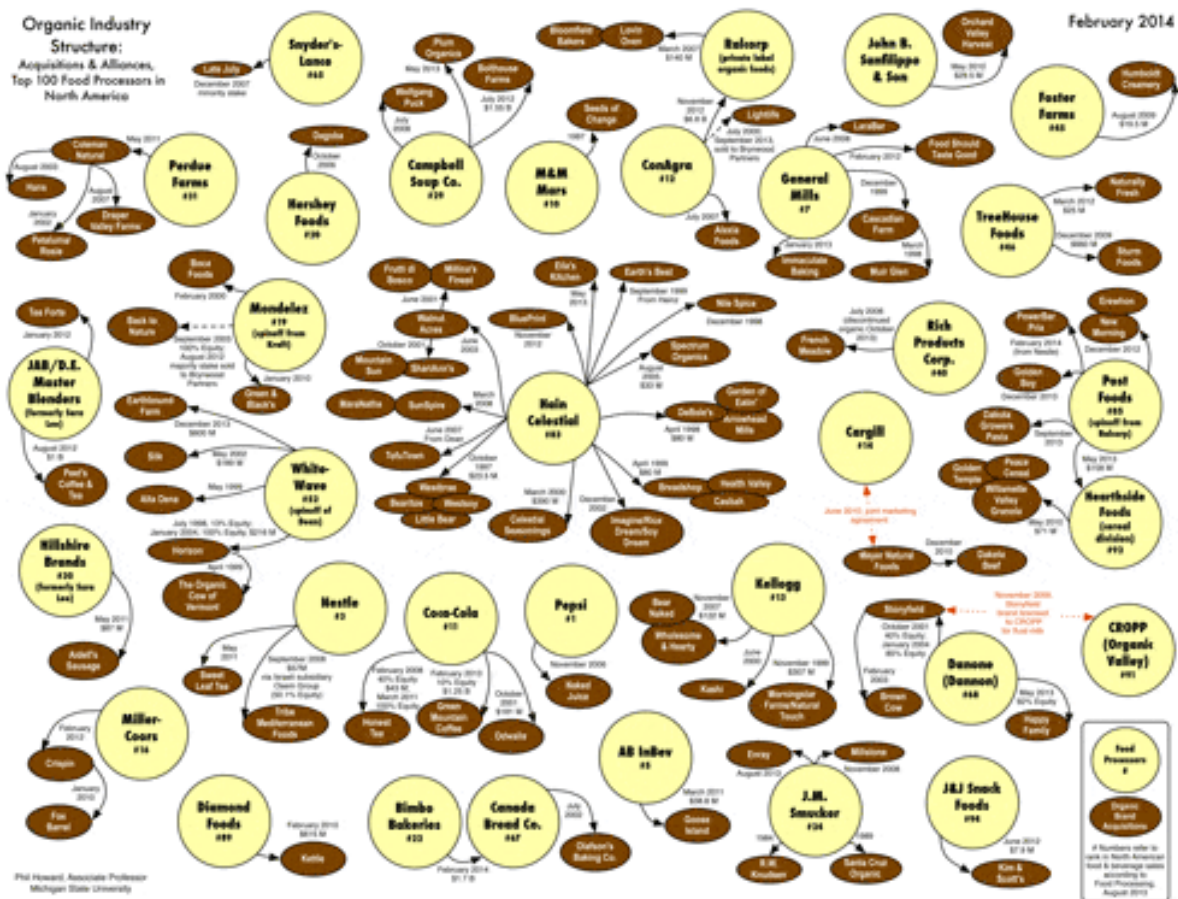
In 1995 there were 81 independent organic processing companies in the United States. A decade later, Big Food had gobbled up all but 15 of them.

Corporate consolidation of the food system has been largely hidden from consumers. That's changing, thanks to tools such as Philip H. Howard's widely circulated "[Who Owns Organic?](#)" infographic. Originally published in 2003, the chart provides a snapshot of the structure of the organic industry, showing the acquisitions and alliances of the top 100 food processors in North America. The chart empowers consumers to see at a glance which companies dominate the organic marketplace.

The Cornucopia Institute has been proud to feature Dr. Howard's work and help supply information helping the Michigan State University researcher keep abreast of the shifting ownership environment in the organic industry.

Dr. Howard released an [update](#) of the chart on February 13. It is posted at www.cornucopia.org.

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Major changes since the last version (May 2013) include WhiteWave's December 2013 acquisition of Earthbound Farm, the nation's largest organic produce supplier, for \$600 million, said Howard, an associate professor in the Department of Community Sustainability at Michigan State. Additionally, Coca-Cola acquired a 10% stake in Green Mountain Coffee for \$1.25 billion, and Bimbo Bakeries (Mexico) purchased Canada Bread from Maple Leaf

Foods (Canada) for \$1.7 billion.

The chart shows that many iconic organic brands are owned by the titans of junk food, processed food and sugary beverages—the same corporations that spent millions to defeat GMO labeling initiatives in California and Washington. General Mills (which owns Muir Glen, Cascadian Farm, and LaraBar), Coca-Cola (Honest Tea, Odwalla), J.M. Smucker (R.W. Knudsen, Santa Cruz Organic), and many other corporate owners of organic brands contributed big bucks to deny citizens' right to know what is in their food.

“Consumers who want food companies that embody more of the original organic ideals would do well to seek out products from independent organic firms,” Howard advises. “Given the very uneven playing field they are competing in, independent organic processors are unlikely to survive without such support.”

Tools such as Howard's infographic and The Cornucopia Institute's scorecards rating organic brands of dairy, eggs, soy foods and breakfast cereals empower consumers to make those choices. The updated chart and scorecards are available for download at www.cornucopia.org.

Howard has created additional infographics and network animations on the wine, beer, soft drink, coffee and seed industries, as well as on foodborne illnesses and the structure of the food system (www.msu.edu/~howardp/index.html).

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