

## **Integrity in Science Watch**

Week of 4/07/06

**Brought to You by PepsiCo**

### **A Common Sweetener Has No Special Link to Obesity**

A new [industry-funded study](#), which claims high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is similar to table sugar in its effects on the body, conflicts sharply with two other recent studies by the [Harvard School of Public Health](#) and the [University of Cincinnati](#), which suggest HFCS consumption may lead to greater fat storage and Type-2 diabetes. James Rippe, an associate professor of medicine at Tufts University, drew his conclusion after measuring the blood sugar, insulin and satiety hormone levels of 30 women who drank beverages sweetened with table sugar or HFCS over the course of a day. The study, presented this week at the Experimental Biology conference in San Francisco, was funded by the soft drink giant PepsiCo, which, like most soda manufacturers, uses high volumes of HFCS.

Rippe is founder and director of the [Rippe Lifestyle Institute](#) in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. According to the [Integrity in Science Database](#), the Institute's clients include over 40 industry and trade organizations such as Astra Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer, Novartis, Nabisco, Kellogg, General Mills and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. Rippe makes frequent appearances on television and in the press, often without mention of his ties to industry.

### **Emails Show Forestry School Dean Went to Bat for Industry Officials**

An Oregon State University dean discussed "damage control" with forest industry officials after a graduate student's paper in *Science Magazine* showed logging in burned-over forests slowed restoration. According to the [Portland Oregonian](#), Hal Salwasser, dean of the College of Forestry, then warned school administrators that the school's fundraising would be hurt by Daniel Donato's paper, which senior professors in the department had sought to squelch. "If there are no quality controls in place why give the college more money to keep doing more of this?" Salwasser wrote the administration. The emails were released in advance of a state Senate hearing this week investigating whether the forestry school's ties to the timber industry have undermined academic freedom.

### **New FDA Drug Safety Board Officials Traveled on Drug Industry's Dollar**

The Food and Drug Administration's new Drug Safety Oversight Board has engaged in extensive travel at drug industry expense, a [new study](#) from the Center for Public Integrity revealed. At least 17 of 29 members on the DSOB, which was created after the uproar over Vioxx, took a combined 160 sponsored trips costing more than \$220,000. Overall, the study showed that various nonprofits and universities with close ties to the pharmaceutical industry provided over \$1.3 million for 3,600 FDA employee trips in the last seven years. Because these organizations define themselves as scientific groups supported by individuals instead of trade associations,

they are able to dodge FDA regulations prohibiting industry from sponsoring travel directly. Top trip sponsors included the Drug Information Association, which has 13 board members who are employees or former employees of the drug industry, and the industry-funded research programs at the Rhode Island, Texas and Wisconsin.

## **Government Websites Still Give False Information on Condoms, STDs**

Federal and state governments continue to lie to the nation's women about reproductive health issues, the [current issue](#) of *Glamour* charges. The Department of Health and Human Services [website](#) for teen health falsely suggests condoms don't protect against several sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including human papillomavirus, an infection that can cause cervical cancer. The issue came to light last July when Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) had [four outside experts](#) review the government website. Meanwhile, several state governments touting abstinence programs have created their own websites with links to [www.abstinencedu.com](http://www.abstinencedu.com), which falsely claims that HIV can penetrate condoms and that condoms do not reduce the risk of contracting STDs. Katharine O'Connell, an assistant professor at Columbia University who studies contraception, said the main reason behind government exaggeration of condom failure is to "manipulat(e) sexual practice...This is not about condoms. It's all about the sex."

## **GAO Accused by One of Its Own Over Warheads Investigation**

A senior analyst with the Government Accountability Office has [charged his agency](#) with "covering up scientific fraud" in his investigation of "Star Wars" interceptor rocket contractors. In a recent letter to Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) and Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA), who jointly requested the GAO study, Subrata Ghoshroy claimed the 2002 GAO report analyzing the \$26 billion missile defense system disregarded doctored data and skewed test results by the two main contractors developing the weapon. "I'm concerned," he said, "that there's no one out there to oversee the overseer." The GAO denied the allegations. GAO chief David Walker, who is half-way through his 15-year term, called Ghoshroy "a relatively low-level, disgruntled employee" out of step with his technical peers.

*The Integrity in Science Database of Scientists and Organizations With Ties to Industry can be found at: [www.integrityinscience.org](http://www.integrityinscience.org).*

*Please circulate. To subscribe to Integrity in Science Watch or to send tips for inclusion in the Database, please send an email to [science@cspinet.org](mailto:science@cspinet.org).*