



Green Fatigue Presents an Opening for Sound Science

By Jay Lehr

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The term “green” has been overused and misrepresented for so long that a considerable percentage of the public is feeling overexposed to it, tired of it, and skeptical of it. In much the same way as global warming fatigue has caught up with a majority of the American public and keeps alarmists in line, green fatigue is a good thing.

Misleading Claims

The public is becoming confused by all the green claims affixed to products on their store shelves. Terra-Choice, a North American environmental marketing company, recently issued a report on 5,000 consumer products in 34 stores in the U.S. and Canada making 12,061 green claims. The study found 95 percent of the products claimed green benefits that were decidedly unproven.

The unproven claims were either outright lies, presented in vague language, or fraudulently labeled.

Deceitful Motives

Rich Kozlovich of the Ohio Pest Management Association has long led the battle against

green fraud. Kozlovich documents, for example, that Integrated Pest Management—a so-called green practice of utilizing “natural” means of controlling insects and other vermin—is focused more on banning chemicals than on eradicating insects.

As Kozlovich notes, removing safe and effective chemical insecticides that keep vermin in check, and replacing them with Third World-style “natural” practices that are only marginally effective at best, is neither green nor protective of human health. The public is becoming increasingly aware of such reports.

Signs of Awakening

Green marketing has been a hot trend, but it is now showing signs of a consumer revolt. In recent months, sales have begun to slow in categories such as green cleaners, and sales are beginning to grow for products that make no pretense of meeting environmental activists’ “green” standards but are far more affordable and effective.

Sales of bottled water also show the waning influence of the green peddlers. Sales of this arch nemesis of environmental extremists have begun to climb again, thanks to its obvious advantages in portability and safety.

The green war against plastic bottles appears to be failing.

History of Alarmism

Environmental activists have only themselves to blame for their declining influence and credibility. Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich, who gained fame and accolades among environmentalists in the early 1970s for predicting imminent global starvation, still garners awards from leftist environmental organizations even though his predictions have been laughably wrong.

Similarly, green activists continue to insist the Soviet nuclear incident at Chernobyl caused the deaths of 93,000 people, yet a 12-year investigation by the United Nations placed the number at 65. Yes, you read it right: 65.

The misguided notion that there are only a few months or years left to save the planet is so discouraging and so untrue that it dampens the effectiveness of the people it is supposed to galvanize. That is a good thing, of course.

More and more people are coming to understand that banning pesticides like DDT has killed millions of Africans from malaria. People are also finding out the obsessive green hatred for genetically modified crops has caused needless malnutrition and even starvation in Third World nations such as Zambia.

There is an old saying that you can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all the time but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time. Nevertheless, this is exactly what the environmental extremists are attempting to do. It should hardly surprise us, then, that their strategy is beginning to backfire.

Opportunities for Truth

The public is being scammed, but people are slowly waking up to the deception. Those of us who see these green scams for what they are must continue to spread the truth about these issues among our friends, family, and colleagues. It is not difficult. It does not even require great powers of scientific persuasion. It only requires the willingness of trustworthy people to openly question the green movement in conversation with friends, family, and colleagues.

Green fatigue has ironically created an opportunity for the proponents of freedom and sound science to spread the truth to the very people who have long been targeted by environmental extremists.

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