

[return to updates](#)

BLUE SKY SODA IS NOT “NATURAL”



by Miles Mathis

[As should be obvious from the tone, the placement, and the language, this paper is a *review* of a product and a personal *opinion*].

I was having dinner out tonight and didn't feel like drinking beer, so I ordered a Hansen's Blue Sky “natural” soda, thinking I was being somewhat healthy. Blue Sky promotes itself as an alternative to mainstream sodas, which commonly use high fructose corn syrup. Unfortunately for the manufacturer of this beverage, I happened to read the ingredient list. I noticed it said “real sugar” for the sweetener. It even said that in big letters on the front, so I didn't need to struggle with the tiny ingredient list font. I thought to myself, “That's curious wording for an ingredient list. Usually they say sugar or cane sugar or pure cane sugar or something like that. What is 'real' sugar?” So I researched it when I got home. Turns out “real” sugar may be a cloaking term for beet sugar. And why not just say beet sugar? Because beet sugar can now be genetically modified. In 2011 the USDA began allowing sugar beets to be GMO. And that is a problem because there is no labeling of GMO's in the US (although there is in Europe, since 2004). These sugar beets could either be GMO or not, we don't know. I assume they *are* GMO, because if they weren't, there would be no need to cloak them with strange wording. If you are proud of your beet sugar, you label it as such in the ingredient list.

This could be a problem for several reasons. First of all, I have a mild allergy to beets, and Blue Sky is not only failing to label the GMO here, it is failing to label the beet. I am paying for that right now as I belch and bloat. But more importantly, of course, is the problem that GMO's are not “natural.” Nothing could be more unnatural than genetic modification, especially when that modification has been proved to cause problems in living organisms who eat it or drink it. In a [decade-long feeding study in Norway](#), it was found by scientists that

The results show a positive link between GE [genetically engineered] corn and obesity. Animals fed a GE corn diet got fatter quicker and retained the weight compared to animals fed a non-GE grain diet. The studies were performed on rats, mice, pigs and salmon, achieving the same results.

... Researchers found distinct changes to the intestines of animals fed GMOs compared to those fed non-GMOs. This confirms other studies done by US researchers. Significant changes occurred in the digestive systems of the test animals' major organs including the liver, kidneys, pancreas, genitals and more.

Other effects on the animals include an inability to digest proteins and immune system alterations.

Another [study in Italy](#)—this one sponsored by the government—found in experiments on mice that the animals fed Monsanto's Bt corn showed allergic and immune responses, including elevated T-cells, elevated IgE and IgG antibodies, and elevated cytokines. [A third study](#) on rats showed elevated basophils, lymphocytes, and white blood cells. These elevations can indicate various diseased states, including cancer.

The reason this is all happening now is that lawsuits held up GMO sugar beets for several years. A federal judge placed a temporary restraining order on the planting of GMO beets in 2009, awaiting an Environmental Impact Study, which Monsanto and the government had so far neglected to complete. But in 2011 the USDA—under pressure from Monsanto, we may assume—decided to ignore the restraining order and the federal court, giving the green light to planting, *even before the Impact Study had been completed*. In this way they were repeating the illegal protocol of Aspartame's introduction, which was done by [ignoring the government's own safety rules](#) and the outcomes of litigation. This is the way things are done now. You cannot expect the government agencies like USDA or FDA to protect you—since they have long been in the pocket of Monsanto and other large corporations—so you better protect yourself by doing your own research.

In researching Blue Sky, I discovered some other things that may interest you. Blue Sky [settled a class action lawsuit](#) recently over its falsely advertising that it came from Santa Fe, New Mexico. I also discovered that Hansen's Blue Sky sodas have had nothing to do with the Hansen family since they went bankrupt in 1988. The name was simply bought at that time along with the product, by California CoPackers Corporation. Just as Tom's toothpaste is no longer made by Tom and Ben&Jerry's icecream is no longer made by Ben and Jerry, Hansen's sodas are not made by the Hansens.

If you think you can avoid GMO beets and therefore be more healthy by buying Blue Sky sugar free sodas, you may want to think again. Although the cans are stamped “Truvia”, making you think this may be a variant of Stevia, it isn't. These sodas are sweetened with acesulfame potassium and sucralose, and Blue Sky gets this sweetener from CocaCola/Cargill, which owns the Truvia name. So you find your money ending up in the pocket of CocaCola either way. These sweeteners, although not caloric, are still derived from corn plants grown by Cargill, and these plants may be GMO. Which means you get all the negatives, including fattening, bloating, and immune responses, with or without the calories.

We have seen this already with GMO's above, but [it applies to Aspartame as well](#). If you are consuming beverages sweetened with Aspartame instead of Splenda or Truvia, you are doing even worse. Aspartame is a known neurotoxin, having caused tumors in laboratory animals. But beyond that, it makes you fatter. In a study [from 1986](#), which included nearly 80,000 women, it was found that those who used artificial sweeteners were significantly more likely than non-users to gain weight over time, regardless of initial weight.

So if you must drink sugary sodas occasionally, you better read the labels, and you better look for sodas which say CANE sugar.* “Sugar” won't do it anymore, or even “real sugar.” I also wouldn't trust “natural sugar” or “genuine sugar” or “100% sugar.” *Organic* cane sugar would be better, and best would be from a company which hasn't been caught lying on many occasions.** Cane sugar isn't good for you, but it isn't yet genetically modified. For this reason it is preferable to beet sugar, which may be, and to artificial sweeteners, which also may be GE and which are definitely bad news regardless.

*I found that although Blue Sky doesn't say its “natural” sodas are made with cane sugar, [many websites make this claim for them](#), either by accident or on purpose. These sites may be using old information, from when Blue Sky *was* made with cane sugar, or they may be confusing Blue Sky naturals with Blue Sky organics, or they may be front sites for Blue Sky, which can later claim to be just “mistaken individuals, unaffiliated to Blue Sky.”

**In other words, I won't be buying Blue Sky *Organic* sodas in future either, even though they are supposedly made with cane sugar. I have already been poisoned by their natural sodas, and can't be unpoisoned by their organic sodas. Once bitten, twice shy, as they say.