CSPI’s Annual Report to Members
To: All CSPI Members
From: Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D., President and Co-Founder
Date: November 18, 2016
Subject: 2016 Highlights & 2017 Challenges

In this special report prepared for members, you can see what your support has helped us achieve this year. I hope you will feel proud of all we’ve accomplished together for safer, healthier food and I hope you’ll help us prepare to meet the challenges in 2017 to:

Make your food safer!

Get Dangerous Additives Out of Our Food

Food dyes. It was a great day indeed when an official from Mars—maker of M&Ms, Skittles, Starburst, and more—came to the CSPI office earlier this year to personally deliver the message that the company had agreed to CSPI's request that it remove synthetic dyes from all its products within five years.

CSPI and Mars had been sparring for years, with my constantly asking them, “If you can use natural dyes for your products in Europe, why won’t you do it in the United States?” The answer is simple: The FDA allows them to use the dangerous synthetic dyes, but in Europe government action has led to either the use of natural dyes or a warning on the package. So kudos to Mars for taking this step—while the FDA continues to be asleep at the wheel.

Dyes are widely used in candy and other foods aimed at children, but also in many others: mayonnaise, salad dressing, certain brands of pickles, chocolate cake, and hundreds more foods. And they pose risks—to both children and adults. In the 1990s, FDA scientists discovered high levels of a carcinogen—benzidine—in two of the most widely used dyes, Yellow 5 and Yellow 6, and the FDA itself declared Red 3 to be a carcinogen. Any action to ban them? None.

And CSPI's 2015 report, Seeing Red, clearly documented the link between dyes and behavioral disorders in children. Yet even while the FDA has itself acknowledged that some dyes may trigger attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children, it refuses to ban the culprits.

So in 2016, CSPI escalated its efforts, delivering to the FDA a letter from top physicians and researchers, legal analyses supporting a ban, and over 2,000 complaints we’ve received from parents about the impact of dyes, many of which are heartbreaking. In 2017, with your support, we plan to do even more:

• Launch a major publicity campaign that will will turn up the heat on the FDA to ban dyes and require warning labels on dyed foods.

Mars will stop using harmful synthetic dyes within 5 years.

• Call on schools and other government entities to purchase only foods without dyes.

• Pressure companies like Burger King and McDonald’s to stop using dyes.

• Work with hospitals, state governments, school districts, medical groups, and others to end the use of food dyes.

Artificial sweeteners. These represent the other most problematic category of food additives, and in 2017 CSPI will be focusing more attention on aspartame. The three best animal studies ever conducted...
And it’s time for the FDA to do the same and protect consumers by getting dangerous sweeteners out of our food.

The “who-knows-what-it-is” additives. It should be the case—and I’m sure you expect it to be—that the FDA reviews the safety of new ingredients added to our food supply. Only ingredients with a long history of use, such as vinegar or pepper, should be added to foods without going through the FDA’s additive approval process.

However, 20 years ago the FDA proposed regulations that allowed companies to introduce new ingredients without telling the agency what they were adding to the food supply and in what quantity! Those ingredients were disingenuously called “Generally Recognized As Safe” (GRAS)—even when there was no general recognition that they were, in fact, safe.

Today, the situation is completely—and dangerously—out of hand. Over the years, companies have added as many as 1,000 chemicals to our food supply without telling the FDA. In addition, the FDA knows about, but hasn’t itself approved, more than 2,000 others. The shocking truth is that the FDA doesn’t know what’s in the food we eat.

CSPI is working closely with several other organizations to improve the FDA’s system for regulating those GRAS additives. We believe strongly that when companies want to introduce what they believe are safe new food additives, they must be vetted by independent experts, not by panels of industry-funded scientists who have long served as rubber stamps for companies. The FDA—and the public—should have an opportunity to review the chemicals’ safety before they reach our tables.

Bottom line: If an additive is in the food we eat, it ought to be safe. Help CSPI lead the way to overhauling the broken GRAS system and press the FDA to do its job.

INGREDIENTS: WATER, SUGAR, CORN SYRUP, MILK PROTEIN CONCENTRATE, VEGETABLE OIL, (CANOLA, HIGH OLEIC SUNFLOWER, CORN), COCOA PROCESSED WITH ALKALI, SOY PROTEIN ISOLATE, AND LESS THAN 0.5% OF POTASSIUM CITRATE, MAGNESIUM PHOSPHATE, POTASSIUM CHLORIDE, CELLULOSE GEL AND GUM, SALT, CALCIUM PHOSPHATE, CALCIUM CARBONATE, SODIUM ASCORBATE, SOY LECITHIN, CHOLINE BITARTRATE, ALPHA TOCOPHERYL ACETATE, ASCORBIC ACID, CARRAGEENAN, FERRIC PYROPHOSPHATE, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, ZINC SULFATE, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, NIA   CI NAMIDE, VITAMIN D3, CALCIUM PANTOTHENATE, MANGANESE SULFATE, COPPER SULFATE, PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE, THIAMINE HYDROCHLORIDE, BETA CAROTENE, RIBOFLAVIN, CHROMIUM CHLORIDE, FOLIC ACID, BIOTIN, POTASSIUM IODIDE, VITAMIN K1, SODIUM SELENITE, SODIUM MOLYBDATE, VITAMIN B12.

Even the FDA doesn’t know what ingredients are in food and if they’re safe.
Stop Squandering Precious Antibiotics

The news that we’ve all dreaded arrived last May, when for the first time researchers found a person in the United States carrying bacteria resistant to antibiotics of the last resort. “It basically shows us that the end of the road isn’t very far away for antibiotics,” said Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Tom Frieden.

The most likely cause of the problem has been festering on farms for years, where far more antibiotics are used in animals than in humans in doctors’ offices. And most antibiotics are used not to treat sick animals, but to promote growth and to compensate for the filthy, crowded conditions in which most pigs, chickens, and cattle are raised. In 2013-14, the U.S. suffered one of the worst outbreaks ever of illnesses caused by antibiotic-resistant Salmonella on chicken—634 people fell ill with infections that were very difficult to treat. That disaster was a wake-up call to both the chicken industry and the public—although CSPI has been sounding the alarm for nearly two decades.

And while the FDA has been strong-armed into inaction by the powerful animal drug industry, CSPI has been moving steadfastly toward two goals to confront this urgent challenge:

First, we must put a stop to the use of antibiotics on farms for anything other than treatment of sick animals. Working with a coalition of consumer organizations, CSPI secured commitments from chicken producers—including food giants Perdue and Tysonsto stop the routine use of antibiotics in raising chickens. We also secured commitments from restaurant chains—including McDonald’s, Chick-fil-A, and Subway—to stop buying chickens raised on antibiotics. We will keep the pressure on other companies to follow suit in 2017.

Second, we must press the USDA to keep meat and poultry contaminated with antibiotic-resistant bacteria out of the food supply. In 2014 CSPI petitioned USDA to declare four dangerous strains of antibiotic-resistant Salmonella to be adulterants in meat and poultry. Doing that would make it easier for USDA to keep tainted products off the market, shut down irresponsible companies, and get contaminated products recalled before they sicken hundreds or thousands of people. We will continue to demand that USDA standards allow 25 percent of meat and poultry to go to market contaminated with deadly germs.

Precious antibiotics are too often squandered to speed growth and fatter profits.
USDA act on our petition, and we will file a lawsuit, if necessary, to force it to act.

CSPI’s next target is getting safer meat and poultry. The USDA oversees the safety of meat and poultry, but it is still inspecting slaughterhouses like it did in 1906. Inspectors look at every animal carcass, even though those inspections can’t detect dangerous bacteria. The proof: Every year the products USDA regulates cause almost three million illnesses. Last year alone, USDA issued 150 recalls after millions of pounds of contaminated and mislabeled products slipped past inspectors. Clearly, this century-old system isn’t working to protect consumers anymore.

I have dedicated CSPI to putting the same effort into modernizing USDA inspections that we succeeded in getting at the FDA in the landmark Food Safety Modernization Act. The need is real. The industry itself is lobbying for changes, but too often their changes would weaken regulation and endanger public health. We’re going to push for effective reform by working with Congress and regulators for smarter laws that focus inspections on prevention with the goal of protecting all of us from tainted meat and poultry and increasingly intractable illnesses.

**Bottom line:** We are nearly out of time to save the most precious jewels in our medicine chest. Please work with us to stop the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria before it’s too late. And help CSPI stop contaminated meat and poultry from entering the market.

**Put an End to Outbreaks**

Last May, Donna Carlson’s fiancé Chris ate a raw oyster while he was on a business trip to Florida. Days later he died of an oyster-borne infection caused by *Vibrio vulnificus*, a nasty bacterium that very often leads to a quick death.

No one should die from eating a raw oyster from the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico when oysters can easily be made safe by pasteurization. Pasteurization kills the germs, but does not affect the taste. So why did Chris die? Because the shellfish industry has consistently refused to take this simple safety precaution.

In fact, since CSPI started trying to get the industry to voluntarily upgrade its practices (to no avail) and the government to make the industry do it (also in vain), hundreds of people have died from eating raw oysters. The shellfish industry has consistently impeded progress, sometimes using its powerful friends in Congress to block action. Maybe that’s why the FDA has been sitting on our petition so long. To force the FDA to act, last May CSPI filed a lawsuit. The FDA then told us and the court that it would respond by the end of the year. I’ll keep you posted. Action is long overdue.

Meanwhile, despite the passage of the Food Safety Modernization Act, implementation of the law has dragged on so long that outbreaks of foodborne illness continue:

- General Mills’ Gold Medal, Wondra and Signature Kitchens flours were tainted with *E. coli* 0121, which caused 42 illnesses in 21 states, hospitalizing 11 people.
- 456 CFR frozen vegetable products caused a *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak that started in 2013 but was not detected until March 2016. It caused three deaths.

But the most troubling was the...
multistate outbreak caused by Dole salad mixes. There were 19 illnesses in nine states from Listeria monocytogenes. All 19 people required hospitalization and one person died. Dole had detected Listeria in its plant but did not test its products for the bacterium. Instead, it cleaned the area where Listeria was found and simply continued production. A classic example of putting profit over people.

As I write and you read these words, the FDA is implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act. CSPI was the driving force behind the passage of this milestone law, but because of one bureaucratic delay after another, we have yet to see many of the changes that could reduce the number of outbreaks caused by tainted food. And if Congress doesn’t adequately fund the FDA to make sure that companies fully comply with the law, we’ll stay stuck where we are. Making sure that the law is fully funded by the new Congress and Administration is one of CSPI’s top priorities for 2017.

**Bottom line:** As individuals, we have no way to make sure our food is safe. But our government can and must. Please fight with CSPI for the safe food we all deserve.

**Make your food healthier!**

Stop the Salt Assault

Diets high in sodium—mostly from salt—are responsible for more deaths than any cause other than tobacco or alcoholic beverages. And cutting sodium consumption in half would save as many as 100,000 lives annually.

That’s why CSPI has focused on reducing sodium since 1977—and why it is such a huge accomplishment that the FDA has finally taken a step in this direction. In the past, companies and the government generally just gave lip service to reducing sodium and went on with business as usual.

Business as usual is salt so well hidden in everything from breakfast cereals to bread to fresh poultry that you need to be a detective to find it. And some restaurant meals are a heart attack on a plate! Consider:

- Uno Pizzeria & Grill’s Whole Hog Burner has six days’ worth of sodium (9,790 mg)
- Red Lobster’s Admiral’s Feast has more than two days’ worth of sodium (4,060 mg)
- Olive Garden’s Tour of Italy (lasagna) has two days’ worth of sodium (3,250 mg)

In 2005, CSPI petitioned the FDA to limit sodium levels in processed and restaurant foods. And for 10 years the petition languished in the bowels of bureaucracy while other countries, including Turkey, South Africa, Canada, and the United Kingdom, tackled the problem by limiting or setting voluntary goals to lower sodium levels.

Last year we said, “ Enough!” and sued the FDA for inaction. So, in June, the FDA proposed sodium-reduction targets that it thinks most food manufacturers could meet in two years and more stringent goals in 10 years. As an example of the kind of reductions possible, Tyson’s Buffalo Style Chicken Strips currently contains 44 percent more sodium than the FDA’s two-year goal and 85 percent more sodium than the 10-year goal.

But targets are voluntary; limits are not. Unfortunately, because of opposition by the food industry and Congress, targets were as far as the FDA and the Obama administration were willing to go. Voluntary actions might work, as they have in the United Kingdom, but CSPI’s challenge for 2017 is to be extremely vigilant to ensure that the voluntary targets are met.

At the same time, after decades of prodding the food industry to reduce sodium on its own, we are making significant headway. A surprising ally in this endeavor has been Walmart. The nation’s largest grocery chain said it would lower sodium levels by 25 percent in its house-brand processed foods and admonished its suppliers (like Campbell Soup and General Mills) to do the same. That goal has not yet been met, but Walmart has re-
ported that the products it sells are, on average, at least 18 percent lower in sodium than in 2010. That’s real progress—about one-third of the way to CSPI’s 50-percent goal for packaged foods.

Restaurant foods are another matter, though. Our most recent survey of the sodium content of more than 2,800 items that were on menus in both 2012 and 2014 found no change at all. That constitutes a real public health hazard, as Americans spend half their food dollars outside their homes.

In 2017, CSPI will be publicizing restaurants and packaged foods that have egregiously high sodium levels. I guarantee you that sodium levels will start to drop with such adverse publicity—and so will rates of heart attacks and strokes!

CSPI’s work and the spotlight we’ve shined on high-sodium foods has brought big players into the battle, including the American Heart Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We’ve even co-sponsored two conferences with the Grocery Manufacturers Association, the food industry’s biggest trade association.

I have high hopes that in 2017 all of this groundwork will result in an even bigger leap forward toward our goal of bringing sodium down to healthy levels.

**Bottom line:** The FDA and food industry are moving in the right direction. We need your help to hold their feet to the fire in the months ahead.

### Put the Sugar Genie Back in the Bottle

Nearly 32 percent of American adults are obese. Diabetes is rampant in both adults and children, along with other diet-related diseases. And sugar, especially the obscene amount in soda, is a big part of the problem.

For nearly two decades, CSPI has been sounding the alarm about the danger of sugar overload in the American diet. In 1999, we started pressing the FDA to address this public health crisis by petitioning the agency to require a line for added sugar on the Nutrition Facts label. And this year we got it! The FDA has required that added sugars be listed on Nutrition Facts labels so that consumers know how much they’re eating. The new labels will start showing up in 2017.

Until now, the label did not disclose how much of the sugar in a food is added—refined sugar or high-fructose corn syrup—and not naturally occurring sugar, as in a peach or a glass of milk. Now it will be much easier for consumers to see many products for the junk food they are and to make healthier choices. And just as requiring trans fat to be listed on food labels led many companies to drop it from their products, so will requiring added sugars on labels lead companies to use less.

The good news is that sugar consumption has declined by 15 percent since 1999. The primary reason is that consumption of sugar drinks (regular soda and energy drinks) has declined by a remarkable 27 percent since CSPI published its first edition of *Liquid Candy* in 1998.

Our aim is to keep sugar intake going down, and one way we’re doing that is to step up our multi-faceted campaign: Clever anti-soda videos and other publicity. A federal bill to tax sugar drinks. Support for activists who have campaigned to get soda taxes in Berkeley, Philadelphia, and other cities. Lawsuits to rein in Coca-Cola’s and Pepsi’s misleading labeling and advertising. San Francisco has required warning notices in soda advertising, and CSPI is working with legislators in Maryland, New York, and elsewhere to do the same.

And we’re winning the battle! Soda consumption is now down to about 1986 levels. But we’ll keep on working until we roll it back to where it was in the 1960s.

Our biggest challenge for 2017 is to get the FDA to enforce the law. The law says that the FDA should limit the amounts of harmful substances in food, and there’s general agreement that current levels of sugar consumption are harmful.

Three years ago, CSPI petitioned the FDA to restrict the amount of sugar in beverages and to urge food manufacturers to voluntarily reduce the amount of sugar in yogurts, pasta sauces, and a hundred other categories of food. We will be pressing FDA officials to do their job by reining in sugar.

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**Nutrition Facts**

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*Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%*
**Bottom line:** Obesity and overweight account for an estimated $190 billion in our national health-care costs. We all have a stake in stopping our nation’s addiction to sugar and sugary drinks, and I urge you to help CSPI keep up the winning momentum in 2017.

When we run into major roadblocks, we invoke the dictum:

**Going to Court**

As you can tell from this report, government agencies and companies often take too long to make progress on their own. But we’ve found great success by asking the courts to quicken the pace of government action or to improve corporate practices.

For instance, a CSPI lawsuit prompted the FDA in 2016 to release the sodium-reduction targets for food manufacturers and restaurants to meet that I mentioned earlier.

And CSPI sued PepsiCo over deceptive labeling of Naked juices, including its “Kale Blazer.” Whod have guessed—seeing the luscious pictures of kale and cucumber on labels and ads for this product—that it was mostly orange and apple juice! Not only was the company defrauding consumers, but it was putting our health at risk with all of that sugar.

Virtually every aisle in the supermarket has misleadingly or deceptively labeled products. Remember Cheerios Protein? It has negligibly more protein than Original Cheerios—but 16 times the sugar! So CSPI stepped in and sued General Mills. Similarly, “WHOLE GRAIN” Cheez-It crackers are mostly white flour. So we sued Kellogg to obtain more honest labels.

As a result of CSPI’s six-year-long legal battle, Coca-Cola stopped making deceptive claims on bottles of its vitaminwater. And, it agreed to state “sweetener added” on bottles so consumers know that the sweetened drink isn’t just “vitamins + water”: A 20-ounce bottle contains about eight teaspoons of sugar! We’ve won similar settlements improving labels or advertising for everything from organic baby food pouches to Nature Valley granola bars. Importantly, our litigation team got Kellogg to agree not to advertise its least healthy products to children, a practice many other companies adopted voluntarily. And our threat to sue Coke and Pepsi spurred those companies to agree to remove its full-calorie drinks from schools. **Bottom line:** Finding—and stopping—false and misleading advertising is one of the most important things we do here at the Center for Science in the Public Interest. And you make it possible.

**I’m sure there are a lot of things you do to keep yourself healthy, from choosing a healthful diet to exercising regularly. But there are some things you just can’t do on your own. That’s why you need CSPI.**

*Former FDA Commissioner (and current CSPI board member) David Kessler said this:*

“We all need CSPI and the vital work it does because those in government desperately need the voice and the influence of CSPI to counterbalance the tremendous pressure from the food, beverage, and agriculture industries that are pursuing their own selfish interests.”

We represent your interests and we’re gearing up right now to fight on many fronts. I need to know you’re with us in the year ahead, so please put your year-end contribution in the mail today. Make it as generous as you possibly can and return it with your survey so that we can make your top priorities our top priorities for 2017.

Thank you.
**FY2016 Expenses**

Total Expenses: $14,060,702

- Nutrition Action Healthletter: $5,495,500
- Projects & Programs: $3,522,800
- Public Education: $2,682,090
- Membership Development: $1,398,470
- Fundraising: $611,441
- Management & General: $350,394

**FY2016 Support & Revenue**

Total Revenue: $14,065,140

- Membership Dues & Subscriptions: $6,105,930
- Contributions: $4,923,480
- Foundation Grants: $949,751
- Royalty Income: $532,904
- Litigation Income: $450,610
- Litigation Income: $127,831
- Investment Income: $53,661
- Net gain on investments: $6,105,930

**FY2016 Statement of Financial Position**

- Total Assets: $9,948,440
- Total Liabilities: $1,993,166
- Net Assets: $7,955,280
CSPI Mission Statement

The Center for Science in the Public Interest is a consumer advocacy organization whose twin missions are to conduct innovative research and advocacy programs in health and nutrition, and to provide consumers with current, useful information about their own health and well-being.

In general, CSPI’s three main goals are:

• To provide useful, objective information to the public and policy makers and to conduct research on food, alcohol, health, the environment, and other issues related to science and technology.

• To represent the citizen’s interests before regulatory, judicial, and legislative bodies on food, alcohol, health, the environment, and other issues.

• To ensure that science and technology are used for the public good and to encourage scientists to engage in public-interest activities.

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