



..... **STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH**
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January 22, 2016 Edition

I had the pleasure of organizing and directing the annual Cow/College at the US Meat Animal Research Center. We centered the seminar this year with some excellent speakers that tackled some of the issues that face the agriculture industry; including a segment by my daughter, Deanna Karmazin, who showed us what we are facing on a daily basis from those that want to put us out of business. I have written about many of those things over the years. I have about seen everything when it comes the attack on agriculture, livestock production and the family farm but this has to take the cake – or should I say cookie? You can call the place where I grew up a “factory farm”, you can call me an “unapologetic carnivore” when in reality I am probably more aptly called an “omnivore”. But just don’t mess with my Girl Scout cookies. Now who in the world would do that? Who would be that shallow or that idiotic? Let’s find out.

Well, I have written about this piece of work before and she is still at it and she has over a million followers on Facebook, another 100,000 followers on Twitter and who knows how many hits she has on her blog or website? This fearmongering activist’s name is Vani Hari or better known as the “Food Babe”. She has attacked about anything we can eat, drink or breathe --and people fall for her GMO free, gluten free, sugar free, red meat free, hormone free, antibiotic free, and additive free baloney! She has gone way too far this time, attacking Girl Scout cookies and it doesn’t matter really what kind. She points out the toxins and poisons in Thin Mints, Tagalongs and - Heaven forbid - Samoas! ---Now that did it!!

I am going to quote right out of her website: “There is no denying that Girl Scout Cookies are delicious but when you find out what’s actually in them, you might think twice about eating them ever again. I used to be a Girl Scout and if I knew what I know now about food and nutrition, I would have boycotted selling them until the ingredients changed. We all know cookies are cookies and they are a treat that isn’t meant to be “healthy.” But, the cookies I like to eat have basic ingredients – flour, sugar, butter or coconut oil, baking soda and eggs. If you’ve been to any grocery store lately, you’ll see that there are tons of options that are just that. So, why is it that the Girl Scouts get little girls to hawk these cookies year after year that are filled with artificial and questionable ingredients? Just take a look at the ingredients, they speak for themselves!”

She goes on to bash sugar made from GMO sugar beets pointing out that the sugar in Girl Scout Cookies doesn’t all come from sugar cane, but instead from genetically modified sugar beets which can contain glyphosate residues from the Roundup weed killer that is prevalently used on them. I am sure you are used to the same talking points that come from these fear mongers about GMO’s and Round-Up Ready crops. She also goes after the corn industry with another tired argument about high fructose corn syrup, saying that there are two versions of of Girl Scout Cookies made by 2 different bakers and that one version of the Thin Mints cookie and some other cookie varieties is (oh my- the horrors!) sweetened with corn syrup. She says that corn syrup can be contaminated with toxic mercury. Now that one I have not heard before.

She is not done yet. Did you know that Girl Scout Cookies contain the awful “partially hydrogenated oils?” She is warning us all that the FDA allows up to 0.5 grams of trans-fat per serving (which is only 4 Thin Mints). Ummmm, yes these are cookies. I know there is likely some fat in them, but I am willing to take the risk. Are you scared yet??? Well she continues by attacking wheat. You would think it would be because of gluten, but she is more worried about the “enriched white flour”, which according to her has been stripped of all natural nutrients so it has no redeeming qualities and is essentially “dead food”. She says that it is pumped with synthetic vitamins (niacin, reduced iron, thiamine mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid) that are not naturally derived but instead these “fake nutrients” are engineered in a lab from such things as coal tar, ammonia, formaldehyde, GMO bacteria, and petroleum. Oh really? And there is nothing fake about her?

And don’t let us forget these awful ingredients - artificial flavors – OMG! She then claims that the type of flavors used by the Girl Scouts is a top secret, man-made concoction of chemicals. Now we come to the part that just horrifies me. We are talking the wicked class IV caramel color (which is added to some Girl Scout cookies like Thin Mints) is derived from ammonia and contains the byproduct 4-Mel which is another carcinogen. To top it off she is inciting people to go to: www.change.org/p/girl-scouts-please-make-cookies-without-gmos that has already garnered over 46,000 signatures. I am sure she is behind an effort to totally change Girl Scout Cookies to protect us all. This is just one of her nutty takes on food!

If you want to see for yourself just go to: <http://foodbabe.com/> I hate to even give you that link. But you must see for yourself. Where do I start in defending all of this? My guess you see it for what is, but unfortunately so many people follow this activist who pretends to be a nutritionist or food scientist but is nothing more than a failed computer science major who is making tons of money off speaking circuit, selling “toxin free” foods and in general lying to the public at the expense of science and the hard working folks that supply all the ingredients for food like my Somoas!! Go away!!!!

Before I quit, I want to return to the Cow/Calf College. Those that attended I believe got a good dose of what we are up against - plus some information on how we can all be AgVocates and tell our story instead of people like Food Babe telling the story they want to tell. Speaking of our story, go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=85OuV-h3bBw&feature=youtu.be Chad Engle, livestock operations manager at MARC, does a superb job of telling the real story about MARC! Go Chad!!

The preceding information comes from the research and personal observations of the writer, which may or may not reflect the views of UNL or Nebraska Extension. For more further information on these or other topics contact D. A. Lienemann, Nebraska Extension Educator for Webster County in Red Cloud, (402) 746-3417 or email: dlienemann2@unl.edu or on the web at: <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/webster>