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## Nationwide boycott of popular organic, natural brands launched

*Honest Tea, O Organics brands targeted by Organic Consumers Assoc.*

by *Sustainable Food News*  
November 15, 2012



Muir Glen is one of many organic and natural food brands targeted in OCA's boycott

The Organic Consumers Association (OCA) on Thursday launched a national boycott of popular natural and organic brands owned by 10 parent companies that donated to defeat the California ballot measure to require labeling of genetically engineered foods.

Opponents of Proposition 37 included the top U.S. food manufacturers - many owning organic and natural food brands - and the world's largest biotech firms. Together, they raised almost \$47 million to fuel a daily barrage of television ads, many misleading, aimed at convincing voters the measure was not in their interest.

Their strategy worked as voters rejected the ballot initiative 53-47 percent, a narrow win but significant given the double-digit lead supporters of Prop. 37 carried just weeks before the election.

Finland, Minn.-based OCA said it is urging its "million-plus network of consumers," the five million voters in California supporting Prop. 37, as well as other consumer and environmental groups to participate in the boycott.

Here are some of the food companies that helped to defeat the measure - and the organic and natural brands they own:

- PepsiCo (donated \$2.5 million): Naked Juice, Tostito's Organic, Tropicana Organic
- Kraft (donated \$2 million): Boca Burgers and Back to Nature
- Safeway, Inc.'s O Organics (member of Grocery Manufacturers Association, which donated \$2 million)
- Coca-Cola (donated \$1.7 million): Honest Tea, Odwalla
- General Mills (donated \$1.2 million): Muir Glen, Cascadian Farm, Larabar
- Con-Agra (donated \$1.2 million): Orville Redenbacher's Organic, Hunt's Organic, Lightlife, Alexia
- Kellogg's (donated \$791,000): Kashi, Bear Naked, Morningstar Farms, Gardenburger
- Smucker's (Donated \$555,000): R.W. Knudsen, Santa Cruz Organic
- Unilever (Donated \$467,000): Ben & Jerry's
- Dean Foods (Donated \$254,000): Horizon, Silk, White Wave

"Among the largest bankrollers of the NO on 37 campaign were huge multinational food and beverage companies whose subsidiaries make billions selling popular organic and natural brands," said Ronnie Cummins, director of the OCA and the Organic Consumers Fund, which donated more than \$1 million to the YES on 37 campaign.

"It's time to send these companies a message: either start supporting GMO labeling initiatives, including the upcoming one in Washington State, or consumers will stop buying your products," Cummins said.

Other state-level efforts to mandate labeling of GE foods are occurring in Vermont and Connecticut. Indeed, the fight over labeling GM foods has gone national.

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Supporters of Prop. 37, which raised just over \$9 million, and the nationwide grassroots movement to have GM foods labeled, said despite the loss in California, their case is stronger than ever, and they vowed to grow the campaign pushing for mandatory labeling across the country.

"This battle is moving to Washington, D.C.," Gary Hirshberg, founder and chairman of Stonyfield Farm, the world's largest producer of organic yogurt and chairman of the Just Label It campaign, [recently told Sustainable Food News](#). "And, although I'm not pleased with where we are in the battle, I am pleased where we are in the war."

The vast majority of corn (88 percent) and soybeans (94 percent) grown in the United States are genetically modified and used as ingredients in over 75 percent of packaged foods found on supermarket shelves. Organic foods are prohibited by federal law to contain GM ingredients.

GM food labeling is already required in more than 60 countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, Brazil, China and members of the European Union.

A voter opinion poll earlier this year on the GE-food labeling issue found nearly unanimous support (91 percent) for requiring labeling of GM foods.



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