



**2016**

ANNUAL REPORT

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# INTRODUCTION

## FIGHTING BACK WITH TENACITY, TRUTH AND SCIENCE

Facts and empirical evidence are under attack. Never before have scientists, scholars, experts and journalists – those whose job it is to pursue and communicate the truth – been so dismissed and derided. They're being replaced by those who place profits over the health of our children, our communities, and our environment.

While some have embraced this change, most Americans reject it. Perhaps more than ever before, people are devouring information and demanding their right to know. When Americans see a wrong or injustice, they want it exposed. When their health and safety are at risk, they want answers and solutions. For most, information is exactly what they need to feel strong and empowered.

For more than 20 years, EWG has been there for American families. Our quest for truth and transparency through rigorous science, data and investigation has made us one of the most trusted sources on drinking water protection, agricultural standards, and chemicals in food and everyday products. Millions of people count on us to give them the critical guidance they need to keep their bodies, their families and their environments healthy.

## WE'RE UPPING OUR GAME

EWG isn't pulling back amid the assault on truth and science. Instead, we're doubling down. We're using every tool at our disposal to uncover the facts and spread the word, in the biggest neon letters, to the largest audience possible.

Over the years, we've found that easy access to information is just as important as the information itself: If people can't get to it, it won't do them any good. In 2016, we worked to improve our delivery through

focused micro websites, convenient mobile apps, expanded social media, infographics, interactive maps and more. By providing easy access to actionable information, we're empowering people to protect their health.

One of the most challenging aspects of this assault on the truth is that it's coming from the highest levels of our government, as well as the regulatory agencies charged with protecting our health and environment. Creating change at the federal level has always been difficult, but a government openly hostile to our core mission of seeking the truth and empowering people with facts makes the battle even more challenging.

Following the results of the 2016 election, EWG immediately launched a strategic response plan. We identified the environmental and chemical regulations, programs and laws that might be first on the chopping block, and which of our causes were most at risk. We then launched our Planet Trump microsite to highlight approaching threats – from unqualified cabinet nominees to the rolling back of environmental protections.

These efforts have only intensified in 2017, and you can be sure we won't be slowing down any time soon. With your incredible support, EWG will keep searching, questioning and empowering Americans to create the best, healthiest, safest lives possible.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### IN 2016:

- **EWG published an astounding 18 major research reports; 265 articles, analyses and commentaries; and 56 press releases and statements – all supporting our mission;**
- **15.8 million people visited our websites;**
- **Our work was mentioned 12,721 times by print, online, TV and radio outlets, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN and The Wall Street Journal;**

- **Our Facebook followers increased to more than 600,000 people**
- **Including paid posts, we reached more than 61 million people on Facebook, averaging an audience of 96,500 people per post;**
- **422,000 people joined our email list, bringing us to a total of 1.8 million subscribers;**
- **887,548 people participated in our action campaigns and petitions to protect our environmental health, natural resources, and food and water safety;**
- **EWG held more than 400 meetings with members of Congress and their staffs on chemical safety, food labeling and farm policy; and**
- **We tracked and championed 50 legislative bills in California to make change at the state level.**

## INVESTIGATIONS

EWG's scientific research reports and studies address some of the most serious health and environmental issues facing our nation. Oftentimes, U.S. laws and regulations don't adequately protect people from dangerous toxins in food, water and the environment. We fill in the gaps where federal agencies fall short. In addition to providing information, EWG offers specific guidance and tips on how to deal with the chemicals and pollutants we come across every day in every aspect of our lives. In 2016, we released several groundbreaking investigative scientific reports that highlighted the risks of eating the wrong kind of seafood, drinking tainted tap water and allowing children to attend schools with PCB contamination.

### **EWG Study Rebuts Federal Fish Advice That Puts Babies at Risk**

Eating fish is an important way for women who are pregnant, nursing or planning to become pregnant to get the omega-3 fatty

acids essential for babies' development. However, seafood also contains mercury, a powerful neurotoxin that is harmful to the brains of fetuses, infants and young children. The Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency recommend these women eat eight to 12 ounces of seafood a week, but we thought the advice was misguided. So EWG conducted a comprehensive study to determine the mercury levels in the hair of women who eat the amount of fish federal agencies recommend. Released in March 2016, the report found that nearly 30 percent of women tested exceeded the EPA safety guideline for mercury exposure during pregnancy. In order to help women choose fish high in omega-3 fatty acids and low in mercury, we developed guidelines that correct the government's flawed advice. We also created a calculator to customize seafood choices based on age, weight and life stage. The study received extensive media coverage, including in major news outlets such as The Washington Post, Time magazine and CNN.

### **Toxic Chromium-6 Found in Tap Water of 200 Million Americans**



About 25 years ago, Erin Brockovich exposed how Pacific Gas & Electric was dumping hexavalent chromium-tainted wastewater in Hinkley, Calif., threatening the lives of unsuspecting families in the region. But more than 20 years later, dangerous levels of the "Erin Brockovich" carcinogen persist in our tap water. In September 2016, EWG released an analysis of federal drinking water data, showing that the water supplies for more than 200 million Americans in all 50 states have been contaminated by chromium-6. Scientists have found that ingesting even tiny amounts of chromium-6 can cause cancer and other ailments such as liver damage, reproductive problems and developmental issues. The report

garnered 1.5 million visits from 1.3 million unique visitors in just one week, as well as 281 unique news stories from outlets such as ABC News, Newsweek and PBS NewsHour. The report inspired more than 75,000 concerned and outraged citizens to sign petitions and letters calling on the EPA to take immediate action on chromium-6 contamination in drinking water.

### **PCBs Remain Severe Threat to U.S. School Children**

EWG worked with the office of Sen. Edward Markey of Massachusetts and America United for Kids to publish the first-ever national summary of PCB contamination in U.S. schools. Released in October 2016, the report found that up to 14 million students in 26,000 schools could be exposed to unsafe levels of PCBs – dangerous industrial chemicals that were banned by the EPA almost 40 years ago. The report shows that 30 percent of American school children have come in contact with PCBs, which have been linked to cancer, immune system problems, neurological damage, learning deficits, low birth weight and decreased thyroid function. The EWG report provided concerned parents with tips on how to deal with the problem, and questions to ask their school and school district leaders.

## HEALTHY LIVING

One of the things people appreciate most about EWG is how we empower them to make smart, safe and healthy decisions every time they go to the grocery store or pharmacy. Our databases, reports, apps, tipsheets and verification program make it easy for consumers to choose products at the point of purchase, while avoiding dangerous toxins and chemicals. Not only did we continue to develop new tools in 2016, but we also updated our current databases to reflect changes in the marketplace and in specific product formulations.

### **EWG VERIFIED™ Program Reaches 800 Products**



The EWG VERIFIED™ program was developed to take the Skin Deep® database to the next level, and make it easier for consumers to quickly identify products that meet

our stringent ingredient and transparency requirements. In order for products to get the EWG VERIFIED™ mark, companies must submit them for approval. Products such as cosmetics, lotions, shampoos and soaps must score in the “green” range according to our criteria, and they must comply with our strict ingredient standards. Companies must have good manufacturing practices and robust labeling. The program went from having 60 listed products in February 2016 to more than 800 by December, and a video about the program was viewed more than 1.5 million times on Facebook.

### **EWG's Dietary Guidelines Help Americans Eat Better**

Every five years, the U.S. issues dietary guidelines that inform federal food policy, what goes into school lunches, how companies label food and what kind of advice health care providers give patients. In 2016, the new federal guidelines were confusing and inadequate because they were unduly influenced by the food industry and were not solely based on science. To correct this problem, we created EWG's Dietary Guidelines, which offer clear, unambiguous guidance on how to choose a diet that's healthy for you and the environment.

### **Picking Produce With the Least Pesticides**

In 2016, we released the annual update of our popular Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce™, which consumers rely on to help them decide which fruits and vegetables to buy organic and which are safe to buy conventional. The guide includes the Dirty Dozen™ and the Clean Fifteen™,

as well as a complete list of 48 items ranked from worst to best for pesticide residues. Upon its release in April 2016, the guide got more than 1 million views on Facebook.

### **EWG Responds to the Zika Threat**

The Zika virus, which can cause severe brain damage in newborns and trigger nervous system disorders in adults, posed a serious threat to millions of people throughout the world in 2016. Those living in or traveling to Latin America and the Caribbean were most affected, but the disease also showed up in Miami, and there was concern that it would spread to other regions of the U.S. EWG stepped up to address the growing crisis by releasing a Guide to Bug Repellants in the Age of Zika to help people, particularly pregnant women, deal with the Zika outbreak and protect themselves with the appropriate repellants and clothing.

### **Work Begins on Drinking Water Database**

EWG has always been concerned with the composition and safety of our drinking water, regularly issuing research, findings and guidance on water quality. In 2016, Americans got a taste of just how serious this issue is when a state of emergency was declared in Flint, Mich., because of high levels of lead in the city's water supply. With concern among the general public on the rise, EWG kicked its plan for a drinking water database into action by securing tap water data from states and organizing it into what would ultimately become the national Tap Water Database.



### **Popular Sunscreen Guide Gets Annual Update**

Consumers have come to count on getting an update of EWG's Guide to Sunscreens each spring so they can be ready to protect themselves from the summer sun with the safest, most

effective products available. The 2016 guide found that almost three-fourths of the 750 sunscreens evaluated offered inferior protection or contained risky ingredients. This comes at a time when deadly melanoma is on the rise, with rates of the disease tripling over the past 30 years. Because children are most vulnerable to sun damage, the 2016 guide focused on sunscreens marketed for babies and kids, and included a list of best-scoring and worst-rated sunscreens for these age groups. In just the first month after its launch, the 2016 Guide to Sunscreens got 5.8 million pageviews.



### **Skin Deep® Adds More Information for Black Women**

With the market for cosmetics for black women growing, EWG felt that women of color needed more specific information about the safety of the products they're buying. Our analysis of 1,177 products found that fewer than 25 percent of personal care products marketed to black women rated well according to the criteria in our Skin Deep® database, compared to 40 percent for the general public. The worst-scoring products were hair relaxers, hair color and bleaching products. The report was supported by influencers like Laila Ali, garnered 1,500 Facebook shares, and was covered by major media outlets including CNN, Fox News, Yahoo! Beauty and Time magazine.

### **EWG Launches Health Living App**

In order to make it as easy as possible for people to use our consumer guides and advice when they shop, we created our Healthy Living mobile app. Launched on Earth Day, April 22, 2016, the app for Apple and Android smartphones and tablets combines the Skin Deep® and Food Scores databases, giving consumers instant access to EWG's ratings. The app allows users to scan a bar code, review ratings and browse

our list of EWG VERIFIED™ products, which go above and beyond to meet our strict health and transparency standards. The app was downloaded more than 500,000 times in 2016 and had more than 100,000 average monthly active users.

## AGRICULTURE

Agricultural practices in the U.S. have a major impact on our environment, public health, food safety and overall economy. But because the industrial agricultural and farming lobbies have an outsize influence on our government, the laws and policies governing agricultural practices are often shaped by business concerns instead of what is needed to ensure the well-being of Americans and our natural resources. In 2016, EWG released several high-profile reports, created and updated our groundbreaking databases, and launched a mobile app and a microsite to clarify facts about our nation's agricultural industry and to encourage reforms for farming practices and subsidies.



### **EWG Pushes for Mandatory Conservation Standards**

In Iowa and across the Corn Belt, drinking water, lakes and rivers are being polluted from farm

runoff. The government's response to this problem has been to encourage farmers to adopt conservation practices to curb runoff by providing them with federal tax dollars. But this voluntary program bolstered by agriculture interests hasn't worked, and the water in the region remains dangerously dirty. EWG's report, "Fooling Ourselves: Voluntary Programs Fail to Clean Up Dirty Water," released in February 2016, proves that there have been no lasting gains and no significant progress in reducing runoff in eight key Iowa watersheds. The report makes a powerful case for making simple, conventional practices mandatory in order to make progress toward cleaner, safer water.

### **Exposing the Truth About Crop Insurance**

"Crop Insurance: A Lottery That's a Sure Bet," describes how the federal crop insurance program has little to do with the traditional insurance market and is instead a convenient, low-risk way for farmers to make money. The February 2016 report highlights how U.S. taxpayers fund about 60 percent of the premiums, all of the costs of administering the program and a large share of the claims payouts. Over time, most growers collect far more in payouts than they pay in premiums. EWG urged reforms to the program to make it more fiscally and environmentally responsible.

### **Debunking Myths That Perpetuate Poor Farming Practices**

In its continuing effort to shine a light on ineffective agricultural practices that harm the environment, in October 2016, EWG published "Feeding the World: Think U.S. Agriculture Will End World Hunger? Think Again." The myth that U.S. agriculture feeds the entire world has been used to defend "modern" farming practices that pollute our air, water and land with toxic chemicals. The truth is that 86 percent of American agricultural exports in 2015 went to 20 of the wealthiest countries, while only half of 1 percent went to nations with large undernourished populations. By debunking the "feeding the world" myth, we can begin to change commonly accepted farming practices that harm the environment and instead develop strategies that will truly increase global food security.

### **Conservation Database Details Programs' Lack of Effectiveness**

Farm conservation programs in the U.S. were designed to protect public health and the environment. Over the past 10 years, taxpayers have given \$30 billion to farmers and landowners to conduct these programs, but we did not have an opportunity to gauge their effectiveness until EWG released the Conservation Database in October 2016. Using data obtained through

Freedom of Information Act requests, the database illustrates exactly where taxpayer dollars have gone and whether they've been used wisely. The seven years' worth of data that was collected show that while progress has been made to decrease agricultural pollutants, the nation is still plagued by contaminated drinking water, toxic algal blooms, microbes resistant to antibiotics and animal waste from factory farms.

### **Database Shows Billions Spent on Farm Subsidies**

The Farm Subsidy Database offers a comprehensive look at the \$349 billion in subsidies given to farmers, including crop insurance, disaster programs and conservation payments. It finds that the majority of the money goes to the largest, most successful farm businesses and is concentrated in a handful of states. EWG updated the database in 2016 to include payments from the new subsidy programs added to the 2014 Farm Bill and launched a mobile version of the database in February 2016.

### **EWG Launches AgMag Microsite**

In order to provide a one-stop shop for information related to agricultural issues, EWG created the AgMag microsite. The site is divided into easy-to-navigate sections, including recent stories, conservation, subsidies, food and water. AgMag's Daily Dish highlights the latest news, and a link to Interactive Maps offers access to a variety of maps illustrating environmental issues nationwide.

## **GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

Millions of people count on EWG's consumer guides, research reports and tipsheets to give them critical information about the safety of the products they use, the food they eat and the water they drink. But these resources are only a stopgap until federal and state regulations extend these protections to the entire population. The U.S. needs to strengthen its oversight of industries - from oil to farming to cosmetics

- to ensure they're not harming our environment or putting our families at risk in service of their bottom lines. That's why EWG has always been active in government affairs. We work closely with lawmakers and their staffs, testify at hearings, bring influential voices to Washington, host lobbying days, reach out to federal and state agencies, and fight court battles, because we know that some of the best ways to advance our cause is to get our nation's leaders' support and change the laws of the land.

### **EWG Leads Effort to Block Passage of the DARK Act**



After years of fighting a bill in Congress that would prohibit states from requiring GMO labeling, in 2016 EWG helped kill the bill known as the Deny Americans the Right to Know Act, or

DARK Act. By hosting Capitol Hill lobbying days, holding congressional briefings with celebrity chefs, meeting with lawmakers and their staffs, and collecting comments and signatures from the public, EWG played a pivotal role in making sure Americans aren't denied the right to know what's in their food and how it's grown. Polls had shown that nine out of 10 Americans wanted clear labeling of GMO products on packaging, as opposed to high-tech gimmicks such as "smart labels." EWG later helped develop compromise legislation to create a mandatory national labeling standard for GMO foods that was passed in the House and Senate, and signed into law by President Obama on July 29, 2016. Our DARK Act petition got 101,037 signatures, the most of any of our 2016 petitions.

### **Toxic Chemicals Law Gets an Update**

The Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 was an outdated law that did not adequately control the use of toxic chemicals in our homes and places of

business. In 2016, EWG worked with legislators and their staffs to revise the law so that it requires the EPA to begin testing 64,000 potentially harmful chemicals. The updated law was passed in June 2016, but EWG continues to lobby Congress to enforce its provisions and move forward with banning the most dangerous substances.

### **EWG Continues Fight Against FACT Act**

Throughout 2016, EWG continued its work in opposition to the Furthering Asbestos Claim Transparency Act, or FACT Act. The proposed law would make it even more difficult for victims of asbestos to be compensated for their illnesses by the companies that caused the harm. Backed by asbestos companies, the FACT Act would make excessive demands for information and paperwork, and would violate victims' privacy by forcing them to disclose confidential personal data such as their names, Social Security numbers and the history of their asbestos exposures. Despite the fact that asbestos is a known carcinogen, it is still legal in the U.S.



### **Push for Cosmetics Regulation Advances in Senate**

In 2016, EWG ramped up its work in support of the Personal Care Products Safety Act,

which was introduced in by Sens. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Susan Collins, R-Maine. The proposed law would require the FDA to investigate risky ingredients in cosmetics and personal care products, allow the agency to prevent companies from selling unsafe products, and give the FDA power to recall any products found to be dangerous. EWG's efforts included working with House leaders to develop companion legislation to the bill; hosting lobbying days with Procter & Gamble, L'Oreal, Revlon, Johnson & Johnson and other industry leaders; conducting polling to show

Americans' support for such legislation; testifying before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions; providing analysis and commentary to the media; and investigating consumer injuries caused by specific cosmetics. While the U.S. government lags in creating a science-based regulatory system for the cosmetics and personal care products industry, EWG continues providing critical health and safety information to consumers through our Skin Deep® database.



### **Toxins Lurk in Wastewater Used to Grow Crops**

Farms in California's Central Valley, which grows 40 percent of all U.S. produce, are allowed to use oil and gas wastewater

to irrigate their crops, potentially putting hazardous chemicals into the food we eat. Over the last three years, farmers in the region irrigated 95,000 acres of food crops with billions of gallons of oil field wastewater, but this practice has been used for 40 years or more. EWG's October 2016 report, "Toxic Chemicals May Contaminate Oil Field Wastewater Used to Grow California Crops," analyzes oil companies' reports to the water board regarding the chemicals they used in oilfields from which wastewater was sold for irrigation between January 2014 and May 2016. The report highlights the amounts of potentially toxic chemicals present in the water, as well as the ways in which oil companies hide ingredients behind "trade secrets" protections. EWG served as a key witness and negotiator for bills designed to improve regulation of the use of oil and gas wastewater for irrigation.

### **Report Links California Policy to Flame Retardant Exposure**

Until recently, California required the use of flame retardants in upholstered furniture. An investigative study by EWG and Duke University researchers released in July

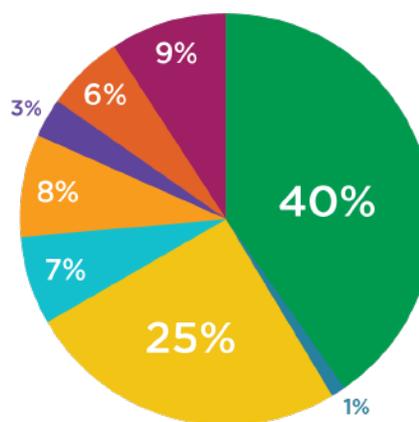
2016 shows that California children and their mothers had higher exposure levels to two toxic chemicals found in those flame retardants compared to New Jersey kids and their moms. The report underscores the need for better government regulations to reduce exposure to harmful chemicals and increased monitoring of what companies are putting in their products. EWG provides recommendations on ways to avoid flame retardants, particularly those found in baby products, and suggests that consumers support legislation banning the use of these chemicals.

### EWG Urges Immediate Action to Address PFOA in Drinking Water

PFOA, a toxic chemical that was used to make Teflon, has been linked to cancer, hormone disruption, heart disease and other serious ailments. Fifteen years ago, the EPA was alerted that PFOA had contaminated drinking water in certain areas. But the scope of the problem has grown from a regional issue to a national public health crisis, prompting EWG to write an urgent letter to then-EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. The letter urged swift action to establish and enforce drinking water standards for PFOA as a contaminant; issue a uniform health advisory about PFOA levels; conduct testing to detect PFOA in drinking water; identify community water systems at risk; and compel companies to supply all necessary manufacturing, processing and use data about PFOA. The letter received national coverage from outlets such as Time magazine and The Wall Street Journal.

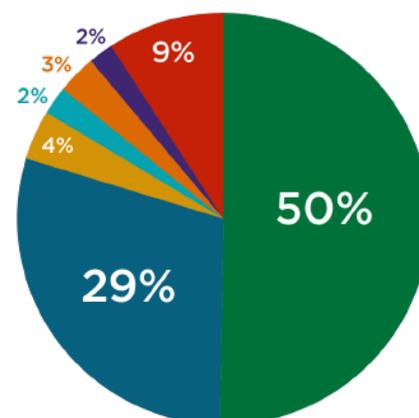
## FINANCIALS

### 2016 EXPENSE



Toxics	4,907,577
Natural Resources	163,477
Food & Agriculture	3,152,581
Management & General	900,212
Fundraising	1,034,865
Events	395,482
Licensing	734,708
In Kind & Other	1,127,655
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,416,557</b>

### 2016 REVENUE



Individuals	6,031,757
Foundations	3,497,000
Private Sector	463,019
Consulting	292,418
Events	390,868
Licensing	279,522
In Kind & Other	1,094,874
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,049,458</b>



## **THANK YOU**

It must be said that none of this could have happened without your generous support. The research, reports, databases, mobile apps, guides, lobbying and testifying - everything we do is thanks to you.

We're proud of what we were able to accomplish in 2016, and we look forward to doing more in the years to come. We promise to keep on digging for the facts and bringing knowledge to light because you deserve nothing less. And no matter what the world might throw our way, no matter how many hurdles we find in front of us, we'll never stop fighting for truth and transparency