

Organic types smug – research

WELL, CUT off my legs and call me shorty; my long-held prejudice about organic enthusiasts being smug, superior types has been all but confirmed by research.

According to a paper in the *Journal of Social Psychological & Personality Science*, people exposed to organic foods “judged moral transgressions significantly harsher” than the control group. They also volunteered significantly less time to help a needy stranger.

Lead author Dr Kendall J Eskine says about the study: “There’s something about being exposed to organic food that made them feel better about themselves. And that made them kind of jerks a little bit, I guess.”

Erskine’s researchers called it “moral licensing” – whereby because you do good deeds in one area of life, you feel you’ve paid your dues and can give up on being good in other areas.

So, according to this study, people who eat organic food are more likely to be judgmental about their fellow man.

Which surely now gives us free rein to judge all those ‘I’m better than you because I only eat organic’ types; who tend to infest the suburbs of Grey Lynn in Auckland, Wellington’s central city region, Lyttelton in Christchurch, plus the rank-and-file of the Green Party of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I’ve felt the judgemental wrath of the outraged organic lobby when some 18-months or so ago, after I penned a tongue-in-cheek column for this paper, suggesting organics may not be as pure or as good for the planet as its exponents have claimed.

The genesis of the column was a couple of presentations to an Australian Farm Institute conference, which suggested organic production was not as sustainable as claimed by its proponents.

In my offending article I wrote how the country’s agricultural productive sector had suffered the disdain of eco-warrior-types who regularly derided the environmental merits of their products



COMMENT
DAVID ANDERSON

and/or systems. I pointed out this was somewhat moot now that research had shown organics was not as environmentally or economically viable as its proponents believed.

Though I was being deliberately provocative, I figured most reasonable people would take the piece for what it was – comment. However, I’d forgotten that organic types – like all evangelists – are rarely reasoned or reasonable. They practise a strange form of democracy that says it is only acceptable if the outcome agrees with what they believe.

So as sure as God made little green apples – Biogro certified organic, of course – came the obligatory indignant letter to the editor from the organic lobby accusing me of being bought off by Monsanto

and the rest.

Yada, yada, yada as George (1990s TV show *Seinfeld*) would say.

Sydney Morning Herald writer Jacqueline Maley, commenting on this latest research, wrote:

“One of the more insidious trends of the modern era... is the moral sanctity people attach to their food choices. Eating is no longer something we do for taste and energy con-

sumption; it is a political act. The ability to select and consume biodynamic, macrobiotic, locally sourced and fully organic food is surely the greatest middle-class indulgence of our time.”

It is hard to disagree with these sentiments when, as a friend recently experienced, being accosted by one of these environmental evangelistic types in the super-

market when buying some meat. Apparently the sanctimonious lady lectured my friend how he must feel awful because the beef he was buying had at some point in its lifetime been drenched.

His question, to the holder of this particular moral licence, was that humans actually worm themselves too, so does that mean we are harming the planet as well? He

then invited her, ever so politely, to take her smug views, crocheted shopping bag and go and climb a tree.

What’s the bet the smug one is the type who breaks the speed limit on the way home, with my friend’s flea ringing in her ear. No doubt, the holier-than-thou crusader will have justified her actions as being okay because she drives a Toyota Prius!



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henryfonterra: Wow 66% support by farmers for TAF – what a thumping endorsement. To those 34% of shareholders who voted against it can I just say: na-na-na! #wewonyoulosteatthat



ianbrownshc: @henryfonterra my Shareholders' Council unreservedly and overwhelmingly would like to join in your gloating over the opponents of TAF. #suckonthatsimoncouper



leonieguineyantaf: How dare you even think about implementing TAF @henryfonterra when you only have 66% support. We believe our minority opposition is more of a majority than your majority support. #wedidnotlosewejustgotlessvotes



damiencoconnormp: I don't think I'm being overly histrionic when I say a 66% vote in favour of TAF is indeed a black day for democratic decision-making in the New Zealand dairy industry! #darkdayfordemocracy



dcarterminforprimaryindustries: Bloody hell, the 66% vote in support of TAF shows the kind of majority a Government in our MMP environment can only ever dream about! #bringbackpp

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