

# Movie Review: *What the Health*

By Dale Lugenbehl, *American Vegan*, Summer 2017, Volume 17, Number 2 page 19.

*What the Health* is the latest video from Kip Anderson and Keegan Kuhn, who brought us the groundbreaking environmental documentary *Cowspiracy*. This time, Kip and Keegan take on the health establishment and this report on their investigation is jam-packed with startling revelations.

Did you know that processed meats—bacon, hot dogs, salami, sausage, cold cuts—are classified by the World Health Organization as Group 1 carcinogens, the same category as cigarettes, asbestos, and plutonium? Warning labels are required on cigarettes, yet there are no such labels required for processed meat.

In addition to not running information about these Group 1 carcinogens on their website, the American Cancer Society actually posts recipes which encourage their consumption. They agreed to do an interview with Kip and then backed out when they found out he wanted to ask about the relationship between food and cancer. Andersen's investigation uncovered the fact that the American Cancer Society lists among its sponsors food industry giants such as Tyson, the largest meat-processing company in the world, and Yum!, owner of Pizza Hut, KFC, and Taco Bell. If the American Cancer Society is taking money from these corporations, should we be surprised if they do not tell us the truth about the dangers of meat?

In *What the Health*, we learn that other major nonprofit educational organizations suffer from the same conflict of interest: the American Diabetes Association accepts funds from Dannon, Kraft (owns Velveeta, Oscar Mayer, and Lunchables), and Bumble Bee (processed meats). Similarly, the American Heart Association receives money from Texas Beef Council, Cargill, Tyson, Subway, ConAgra Foods, General Mills, Perdue, Kraft, Mars, Dominos Pizza, and many others. This may explain the numerous beef and egg recipes on the American Heart Association website!

Every one of these “health” organizations declined to be interviewed regarding the connection between their sponsors and the information these organizations put out.

Perhaps we can get reliable information from governmental organizations such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)? Andersen's report is shocking. Many of us already knew that the USDA has two jobs: 1) insure healthy food for consumers, and 2) promote the welfare of the food industries. Clearly these two jobs are in conflict, and equally clearly the food industries have vast financial and lobbying resources that individual citizens do not—consequently the food industries consistently win out with the USDA.

What we probably did not know, however, is that USDA's U.S. Dietary Advisory Committee, which issues food guidelines for consumers, is consistently made up of people who have accepted money from National Dairy Council, American Meat Institute, McDonald's, American Egg Board, Dannon, Kellogg's, Mars, CocaCola, Sugar Association, Hershey Co, Anheuser-Busch, Campbell's, Kraft, and M & M's. This has allowed these food industry giants to exercise enormous control over USDA diet recommendations over the years.

*What the health* has done us all an enormous service by bringing this information to light. Finally *seeing* what has been going on creates the possibility of positive change.

The above is a good sampling of the kind of revelations to be expected from *What the Health*. Other issues explored in the video include: The “Ag-Gag” laws which restrict saying

anything—even if it’s true—that disrupts the profits of animal industries; the food industry’s determination to create confusion about scientific studies implicating their foods in order to keep people buying (“One study shows one thing and another shows the opposite, nobody really knows what’s healthy.”); the pharmaceutical industry and its emphasis on treatment rather than prevention (prevention being much less profitable); and many other health-related issues. Numerous interviews and excellent short animation segments are very enlightening.

This is an outstanding, must watch” documentary, and comes with the highest possible recommendation. Available from [whatthehealthfilm.com](http://whatthehealthfilm.com).