

Winner of the James Beard Award



If you've ever eaten a fresh tomato in the winter, then you've eaten a fruit picked by the hand of a slave. Click on old Jim's face to read Estabrook's James Beard Award winning article on this national disgrace.

People are always asking me whether it's OK to eat this or that seafood. Do what I do when in doubt: Link to Seafood Watch's Guide to Sustainable Fish



The Monkfish says, "Click on my mouth to link to the handy Seafood Watch guide. I won't bite you if you don't bite me."

Using Recess Appointment, Obama Sneaks Pro-GMO, Pro-Pesticide Lobbyist into Key Agricultural Post

Posted by Barry on March 31, 2010



Not in Siddiqui's back yard.

The Obama administration's schizophrenic approach to agriculture policy —making PR gestures toward local, organic, and sustainable farming with one hand, while nudging ahead the agendas of agribusiness giants like Monsanto and Dow Chemical with the other—was on full display this weekend when the president used a recess appointment to install Islam Siddiqui as the chief agricultural negotiator in the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

"He was a singularly poor choice," said Dr. Marcia Ishii-Eiteman, senior scientist with the Pesticide Action Network North America. "He is the wrong person with the wrong background. We are surprised and very disappointed that President Obama recess-appointed him. There should have been a full senate vote.

It's telling that Obama stooped to using same cynical, behind-the-scenes tactic to secure the Siddiqui appointment that his predecessor used to place judges like Charles Pickering (blocked because of past decisions that some considered racist) on the federal bench.

Prior to his appointment, Siddiqui was a vice president and lobbyist for Croplife America, a trade organization representing major corporate players in the agricultural chemical industry. Croplife became known to the public when it berated Michelle Obama for putting in a (horrors!) organic kitchen garden at the Whitehouse.

"The garden is a great idea and the photo op of the First Lady and the local elementary school children digging up the ground was precious, but did you realize that it will be an organic garden?" the industry group wrote during Siddiqui's tenure, in a plea to supporters to launch a pro-pesticide letter writing campaign. "What message does that send to the non-farming public about an important and integral part of growing safe and abundant crops to feed and clothe the world—crop protection products."

It was part of a career-long pattern of Siddiqui being on the wrong side of sustainable agriculture issues. He played a key role in drafting language (eventually rejected) that



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Short newsbites from the world of food politics. My blog: www.politicsoftheplate.com

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would have allowed genetically modified crops, crops treated with human sewage sludge, and crops exposed to irradiation to be considered organic under United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards. In 1999, while at the USDA, he fought against consumer labeling of genetically modified foods, saying it would lead to increased food costs.

His nomination was expected to sail through the confirmation process when announced late last year. But it stalled when over 90,000 individuals and nearly 100 consumer advocacy groups representing farmers, environmentalists, religious organizations, and labor rights activists rose up to express their objections.

"At Crop life Siddiqui was all about promoting genetic crops and pesticides," said Ishii-Eiteman. "When word got out that he had been nominated, it hit a nerve with the public."

Given that Siddiqui's employer also chose to diss the First Lady's horticultural philosophy, it might have hit a nerve a little closer to home for the president. "You have to wonder what kind of dinner conversations they had," said Ishii-Eiteman.

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united health says:
April 6, 2010 at 2:17 pm



Obama is probably the most centrist president we have had in the last 10 administrations. You need to look at what he is doing and not the way it is spun on TV. The crime here is that Americans have become so hypnotized by the box in our living rooms that we no longer think about the actions of our leaders. Obama is just as plugged into the Military Industrial Complex as Bush was. Obama is continuing almost all of the Bush era policies (except for Nukes and Gays in the Military). He is even expanding Afghanistan and now opening up more oil drilling of all things. Americans need to get informed rather than hypnotized.

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