

Syngenta's atrazine PR campaign unveiled

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From [attacks on independent scientists](#) to [smear campaigns against the courts](#), we thought we'd seen it all from [Syngenta](#). But the world's largest agrichemical producer continues to lower the bar in its efforts to protect its flagship product, [atrazine](#).

[New documents](#) obtained by the Center for Media and Democracy reveal the details of Syngenta's multimillion dollar "[message management](#)" campaign for atrazine. Their tactics? Muddy the science, manipulate public perception, and prevent a clear, independent scientific review.

Unfortunately, so far their aggressive campaign has paid dividends. Atrazine continues to be one of the most widely used herbicides in the U.S., despite a longtime [ban in Europe](#) and a growing list of proven [health effects](#). As a result, this endocrine disrupting chemical now shows up in an astounding [94% of U.S. drinking water](#).

During spray season in states where atrazine use is heavy, researchers have measured water contamination at levels almost [80 times the federally set safety limit](#).

Syngenta's detective novel-style tactics include:

- Preparing secret dossiers on journalists writing about atrazine.
- Hiring "[third party spokespeople](#)" such as Elizabeth Whelan, president of the [American Council for Science and Health](#) and Alex Avery of the Hudson Institute to tout the company message while appearing to be unaffiliated with Syngenta.
- Investigating and attacking the independent foundations that fund the work of nonprofit groups like PAN.
- Hiring an investigative reporter to analyze how best to influence the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the federal agency that regulates pesticides. (Or, as bluntly stated in the Syngenta meeting [agenda](#), learning "what buttons to push and cages to rattle" at

EPA.)

Syngenta's dossier on PAN

It turns out PAN's efforts to shine a light on concerns about atrazine has earned us Syngenta's attention. As we go about our work to highlight the science on atrazine's health and environmental effects, and publicize the [company's efforts to influence science](#) and policy decisions affecting their flagship product, Syngenta's lawyers have (we now know) [been tracking our every move](#).

If their intention is to frighten us off the case, they will not succeed. We might not have Syngenta's enormous budget or massive PR machine, but with science and people power on our side, we will keep pushing back against corporate control of public perception, policies, and processes.

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