

I think most of us know by now that, ideally, we should be drinking organic milk so that we avoid consuming antibiotics, synthetic hormones, and pesticides. However, have you thought about the ice cream your family eats? Most ice cream companies, including Haagen-Dazs, Breyers, Dreyers, and Baskin-Robbins, make their ice cream out of milk and cream that's not hormone-free. They advertise their milk and cream as the "purest" and "freshest," but they don't mention that the dairy might contain rBGH and rBST, genetically engineered bovine growth hormone originally produced and marketed by Monsanto (under the name Prosilac) which has been commonly used by the US dairy industry since 1994 to increase milk production.

Cows treated with rBGH are susceptible to developing mastitis, which creates infection and pus in the milk produced. The cows are then treated with antibiotics for the infection and this also filters into the milk supply.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and 27 countries in the Europe Union have banned the use of these hormones, citing concerns about the hormone's link to illness in animals and cancer in humans. The United States Government continues to declare that there is no known link between rBGH/rBST and cancer in humans.

The good news is that more and more companies are producing dairy products without rBGH and rBST, and more and more consumers are demanding hormone-free products. Big Agra, like Monsanto, are very, very powerful, but so is the consumer if we all pay attention and send a message with our consuming dollars.

Companies that have committed to producing hormone-free dairy products are: Ben & Jerry's, Stoneyfield, BelGioioso Cheese, Wawa Dairy, Yoplait and Dannon, Tillamook Cheese, Walmart and Sam's Club milk, Starbucks' milk and cream, Chipolte Grill sour cream, and Safeway dairy products on the West Coast.